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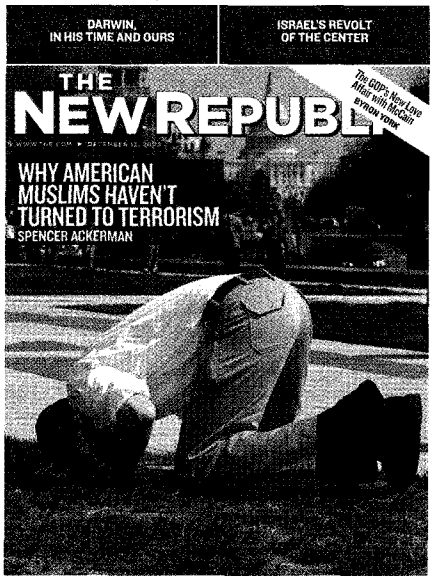
CORRESPONDENCE

FIFTH COLUMNS?

SPENCER ACKERMAN WRITES, "IT'S startling how few American Muslim extremists there actually are" ("Religious Protection," December 12, 2005). He contrasts American Muslims with their European counterparts, who, he finds, have turned to terrorism. No American Muslim terrorists? Where has Ackerman been? In an article and on my blog that very week, I reported on 15 American Muslim converts who have either engaged in terrorism or were convicted of trying to do so. In a follow-up piece, I listed another 15 American converts to Islam indicted, arrested, or suspected of terrorism. That's 30 converts. I have not counted the immigrant Muslims and their offspring implicated in terrorism, but here is some information that gives an idea of the size of the problem: With the exception of the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995, notes Al Qaeda authority Rohan Gunaratna, all major Western terrorist attacks in the past decade have been carried out by immigrants. A closer look finds that these were not just any immigrants, but invariably those from a specific background: Of the 212 suspected and convicted terrorist perpetrators during 1993–2003, 86 percent were Muslim immigrants, and the remainder were mainly converts to Islam.

"In Western countries, jihad has grown mainly via Muslim immigration," concludes Robert S. Leiken, a specialist on immigration and national security, in his recent monograph, *Bearers of Global Jihad?: Immigration and National Security after 9/11*. If one were to apply that 86 percent figure just to the United States, it points to some 175 immigrant Muslims associated with terrorism. Let's round it off to 200 cases of American Muslims who have "turned to terrorism," an eminently reasonable figure. Ackerman waves these away by saying that "there have been a few instances of American Muslims becoming terrorists. Those extremely rare cases, however, are far better explained by individual pathology than by rising Islamic militancy due to group disaffection." Yes, 200 people out of a population of some 3 million is "extremely rare," but the same applies in Europe, where actual terrorists are also a tiny percentage of the total Muslim population. In short, Ackerman's premise is utterly flawed; unsurprisingly, so is the analysis that follows, namely his claim that better social and economic opportunities open to American Muslims as well as "America's ability to accommodate Islam itself" are to thank for the benign situation in the United States.


DARWIN, IN HIS TIME AND OURS
ISRAEL'S REVOLT OF THE CENTER
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WHY AMERICAN MUSLIMS HAVEN'T TURNED TO TERRORISM
SPENCER ACKERMAN

DANIEL PIPES
Director
Middle East Forum
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ACKERMAN'S STORY IS PREMISED upon a not very subtle form of condescension and prejudice. The article gives the impression that one should somehow be shocked that American Muslims haven't taken to widespread suicide bombings. "Indeed," Ackerman writes, "given the availability of extremist messages to American Muslims … it's startling how few American Muslim extremists there actually are." It is something of a truism to argue, as Ackerman does, that American pluralism—and perhaps also American religiosity—have contributed to the integration of Muslims into the United States. But the answer to the loaded question of "why American Muslims haven't turned to terrorism" may lie in a more basic consideration: American Muslims may simply feel that terrorism is an abomination. The suggestion that American liberalism and religiosity have ingeniously conspired to keep American Muslims from engaging in acts that they would otherwise be inclined to commit is of a piece with the climate of racially tinged suspicion that continues to hang over them some four years after September 11—one that makes them feel less, rather than more, American.

MALICK GHACHEM
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SPENCER ACKERMAN RESPONDS: Not only did I never write, contra Daniel Pipes, that there are "no American Muslim terrorists," but I cited several, and I used as a test case the story of Adam Gadahn, the rare (and perhaps only) American convert to Islam that Al Qaeda can count among its ranks. My article contrasted the different social, economic, and religious opportunities available to Muslims in the United States and in Europe in order to explain the *relative absence* of anti-U.S. terrorism by American Muslims. To refute my piece, Pipes repeatedly conflates terrorism in "the West" and terrorism in the United States—precisely what my article disaggregates at length. Most astonishingly, he derives a hypothetical number of American terrorists from scholarship concerning Muslim converts in other Western countries and then accuses me of waving away his invented American suspects. And Pipes wonders why I don't read his blog? ■

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The New Anti-Semitism

Who are its advocates? What are its goals?

The Holocaust, in which over six million Jews were brutally murdered by the Nazis and their enthusiastic collaborators, happened over 60 years ago. So terrific were the events that – even today, about two generations later – nobody would wish to identify himself with them. Yet, a new anti-Semitism is now rearing its head. It is important to be aware of it.

What are the facts?

Who are the new anti-Semites? The new anti-Semites do not publicly proclaim their desire to bring about a second Holocaust or to subject the Jews to mass murder or annihilation. The hatred is aimed against the state of Israel, which, according to the new anti-Semites, represents all that is evil in the world and which is the main violator of human rights and guilty of virtually every other abuse that can be conceived. This poison is now so widespread that a poll taken in Europe not too long ago found Israel to be the greatest menace to the peace of the world – far ahead of such murderous regimes as those of Iran or of North Korea.

> "...the viciousness, volume and consistency of this criticism against Israel is such that it cannot be considered as anything but anti-Semitism..."

The leaders and instigators of this new anti-Semitism are concentrated on the political left, its most active and vocal spokesmen being found in our prestige universities. Such is the anti-Zionist (anti-Semitic) focus of the left that, almost incomprehensibly, it includes a fair number of Jewish professors and other "intellectuals," not just here in the United States, but even in Israel itself.

Those on the extreme left call for the abolition of the State of Israel outright, although they do not tell us what they propose to do with the five million Israeli Jews. They would presumably be left to the tender mercies of the Arabs, who would, of course, have no greater joy than to emulate or perhaps even to "improve" on the Nazi model and to give "final solution(!) to the Jewish problem" once and for all. That isn't going to happen, of course, not because anybody in the world would lift a finger to prevent it, but because, fortunately, Israel is a very strong and most capable nation.

A death wish for Israel. In deference to "world opinion" and also to the wishes of the United States, Israel has allowed itself to be pressured into innumerable concessions to those who are sworn to destroy it. But it seems clear that, when the chips are really down, a most decisive response on the part of Israel can be expected. With the possible exception of Carthage during the Punic Wars, almost 2500 years ago, no country in the world, no country in recorded history, has ever been threatened with extinction. Israel is the one exception. Fueled by the extreme left, the "legitimacy" of Israel is a constant topic of discussion. The abolition of the "Zionist entity" gets serious attention, even in the hallowed halls of the United Nations. Iran feverishly pursues the Holy Grail of atomic weapons. Its president has publicly declared – not once, but repeatedly – that Israel is a "tumor" that must be excised and that it must be wiped off the map of the world. Medium-range missiles (so far, fortunately without atomic warheads) are being paraded through the streets of Teheran, with signs attached to them, shamelessly giving their destination as Jerusalem. A few eyebrows are being raised around the world, but otherwise nothing is being done about it.

Because the memory of the Nazi Holocaust still lingers after all these years, the new anti-Semitism is disguised as the socially more acceptable "anti-Zionism." It is pursued and propagated by the radical left. Every leftist demonstration – be it about the war in Iraq, against globalization, for or against whatever else – does inevitably include appeals against "Israeli subjugation of the Palestinians," the "occupation of Palestinian lands by Israel," or simply asks for the elimination of Israel. Sadly, quite a few Jews, having been saturated with leftism from their early years, participate in such demonstrations.

While the propagation of the new anti-Semitism by prestige universities started in Europe (mostly in England), it has found fertile ground in the universities of the United States. The active participation in the new anti-Semitism by the American clergy (beginning with the Presbyterians) is a scandalous reality.

Surely, not everybody who criticizes Israel is an anti-Semite. The actions of Israel, just as the actions of any other countries, are subject to examination and criticism. But the viciousness, volume and consistency of this criticism against Israel is such that it cannot be considered as anything but anti-Semitism – the new anti-Semitism, disguised as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism. The foolish professors and the hypocritical preachers are besotted by their leftism and by their hatred against Israel and America. Overt vilification of America has to remain muted – it's somewhat dangerous to be too outspoken about it – but Israel, perceived as the satrap and the handmaiden of the United States in the Middle East, is an easy target. Nobody should be fooled. Anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism in whichever way it may be disguised.

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Character Flaw

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

ROUGHLY THREE YEARS, 2,000 American deaths, $200 billion, and no functioning government later, the Bush administration has finally laid out its plan for victory in Iraq. And the plan is ... humility. I'm not kidding. Last month, *The Washington Post* reported that top White House advisers have concluded that the key to regaining public support for the war is to adopt a more humble approach—for the president to be "more open in admitting mistakes" and to weave "the humility theme" into speeches. These aides reckon that, while roughly one-third of the country is dead-set against the war, there is a middle third that has grown frustrated with the effort but could be won back with the right atmospherics. It's a bit like feuding with a spouse, one official explained to the *Post*: "You need to give voice to their concern."

And so, lately, we've been treated to all manner of spectacle devised to show that Bush is actually a deeply humble person: the president's praise for Representative John Murtha, the grizzled ex-Marine who favors immediate withdrawal from Iraq; his occasional nod to the sincerity of the antiwar camp's views. The high point of the administration's humility offensive came last Thursday, when Bush paraded a who's who of former Cabinet officials through the White House for a short war briefing. According to *The New York Times*, Bush even spent part of the session soliciting advice from the likes of Robert McNamara. The wizened kids were then promptly ushered into an Oval Office photo session. Bush pronounced himself "most grateful for the suggestions that have been given."

What's going on here should be pretty obvious. The Bushies have decided to focus on character (whether the president is humble) in order to address substance (whether the war is winnable). This is hardly surprising, of course. The Bushies have excelled at nothing if not reducing substantive matters to issues of character. The question is whether it can work when it comes to public opinion on Iraq.

Certainly, the Bushies have proved that the strategy can work on the campaign trail. And it's not hard to see why it does. For one thing, the decision to vote for a president is an intensely personal one. The president is both a chief executive and a figurehead—someone who will appear on your TV screen day in and day out for four years. Not surprisingly, people tend to vote for the candidate with whom they feel more personally comfortable. Second, as my colleague Jonathan Chait has written, few political reporters are experts on public policy. As a result, coverage of presidential campaigns focuses heavily on character. Third, elections are graded on the curve. You don't have to achieve any absolute level of competence. You just have to be more likeable than the other guy.

In this context, the major innovation of the two Bush campaigns has been to use policy chiefly as a way to inform opinions about Bush's character. In 2000, for example, Bush's massive tax cut demonstrated he was a regular guy who trusted "the people" to make decisions about their money, while Al Gore, he claimed, wanted a bunch of overeducated Washington bureaucrats to spend it for them. Bush's proposals for education and faith-based initiatives showed that, unlike other Republicans, he was a compassionate and tolerant man. And, as my boss, Peter Beinart, has noted, Bush used Iraq to highlight his inner strength, resolution, and force of will in 2004. Bush, by making the unpopular decision to invade, demonstrated that he had these qualities. John Kerry, by criticizing the war, demonstrated that he did not.

The flaw in the Bushies' preoccupation with character is that, while you can use policies to shape voters' opinion of your character, it's much more difficult to do the reverse—use character to shape people's views of otherwise unpopular policies. The reason is that voters do, in fact, care about policy. They just don't care much about it as a hypothetical proposition—i.e., during elections. But they get very interested after elections, once it looks like the policy might affect their lives. At that point, characterological appeals fall flat. This single fact may explain why the Bushies are so good at campaigning, but so bad at governing.

Social Security privatization is the most obvious example. During the campaign, touting privatization made Bush sound like a guy who trusted you to make decisions about your own retirement. When it came time to actually pass Social Security privatization, however, voters started to worry about the risk to their retirement income.

Likewise, Bush tried to sell Harriet Miers to conservatives by invoking her character and his friendship with her, and to Democrats by including them in the process that produced her nomination. But conservatives worried that Miers would be too liberal on gay rights and affirmative action, while Democrats worried about her views on abortion. The nomination went nowhere. More recently, Bush tried to calm conservative critics of his immigration policies by traveling to the Southwest and mouthing tough enforcement rhetoric. Conservatives, who no doubt believe Bush is tough, didn't buy it, because his policies belied his words. (The House subsequently passed a draconian anti-immigration bill.)

Which brings us back to Iraq. Probably the biggest criticism of Bush's foreign policy is that it's arrogant. That can mean one of two things: that Bush's policies are arrogant or that Bush the man is arrogant. When critics accuse the administration of being arrogant, they generally have the first definition in mind: that Bush is too optimistic about our ability to build a democracy, that he believes his administration has the right to torture prisoners, that he refuses to work with our allies abroad, that he doesn't fire reckless subordinates. The criticism the Bushies have responded to, however, is the characterological one—hence the charade of Bush consulting with the ghosts of administrations past. The hope seems to be that, by showing Bush to be more personally humble, they will blunt the substantive critique as well.

But that's nuts. And you need only consider an exchange between Bush and Madeleine Albright to see why. During last Thursday's consultation, Albright wondered whether Iraq had diverted the White House from bigger threats in Iran and North Korea. "I can't let this comment stand," Bush protested, adding that his administration "can do more than one thing at a time." Somehow, the president's newfound humility doesn't seem to run very deep.

NOAM SCHEIBER

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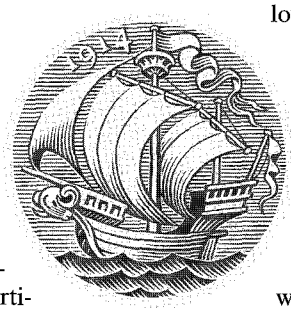
Error Message

WHEN THE JACK ABRAMOFF scandal first broke, the main Republican line of defense was to construe the problem as narrowly as possible. GOP Representative Bob Ney, who now faces likely prosecution for accepting travel, gifts, and campaign cash in exchange for doing Abramoff's bidding, attempted to denounce Abramoff and his partner, Michael Scanlon, as "two nefarious individuals." The message was that, somehow, a couple of bad apples had managed to find their way into the corridors of power in Washington, but they would be prosecuted, and life would go on.

As the scandal has deepened, this excuse has become difficult to sustain. And so Republicans have retreated to a second line of defense—namely, construing the scandal as broadly as possible. The problem shouldn't be confined to those members of Congress and staffers with whom Abramoff had a close relationship. It should be expanded to include everybody who received money from anyone who ever dealt with Abramoff. Suddenly, what do you know: It's a bipartisan scandal! As President Bush put it last month, Abramoff "was an equal money dispenser. ... [H]e was giving money to people in both political parties."

Unfortunately, this second line of defense has taken root in the news media, which is always eager, in the spirit of evenhandedness, to attribute equal blame for any problem to both parties. A couple of examples provide the flavor of such coverage. *The Washington Post* reported last month that, while "Democrats are hoping to capitalize on Republican ethical woes," prominent Democrats "were among beneficiaries of the largest campaign contributions from Abramoff's associates and clients." Dan Abrams of MSNBC asked, "It does seem most of his connections were to Republicans, but there are some Democrats who've had connections with him as well, right?"

The hilarity of this is that, before he became a figure of disgrace, nobody who knew the faintest thing about Abramoff wondered about his partisan affiliation. Abramoff came into politics alongside GOP operatives like Ralph Reed and Grover Norquist in the College Republicans, and he shared their total-war mentality. ("It is not our job to seek peaceful co-existence with the Left," he once said. "Our job is to remove them from power permanently.") He raised more than $100,000 for Bush's reelection, making him a "pioneer," and he earned a position on Bush's transition team after the 2000 election. If Abramoff's small number of dealings with Democrats qualify him as bipartisan, then nobody is partisan.



How has Abramoff, in his political death, earned a reputation as a healer of the partisan rift that he worked so hard to deepen during his political life? There are two main conceptual errors at work in the current news coverage. The first involves lumping all Abramoff connections into the same category. Abramoff's clients made many campaign donations to many members of Congress from both parties, but this isn't really the issue. Most of these donations are scandalous only to the degree that any political donations are scandalous. No, the real issue is which members received donations from Abramoff's clients *at his behest* or accepted direct personal benefits—including lavish trips or make-work jobs for their wives—from him. This list is almost entirely Republican.

The second, and larger, conceptual error has been a failure to place Abramoff within the context of the Republican Party's takeover of K Street. The GOP domestic agenda has evolved to the point where it is almost completely indistinguishable from the accumulated whims of its funding base. Republicans explicitly wanted to destroy the old bipartisan arrangement, whereby lobbies cultivated ties with both parties, and replace it with one in which lobbies gave their exclusive loyalty to Republicans. GOP leaders called this effort the "K Street Project," and they cajoled and threatened lobbying firms to hire and donate only to them. Abramoff was the poster boy for the new breed of lobbyist/activist, loyal to his clients and his party. (Of course, in reality, it turned out Abramoff was loyal only to himself.) The implicit, and sometimes explicit, terms of this arrangement held that the riches lobbyists bestowed upon Republicans would be returned manifold in the form of favorable legislation. As a result of the success of the K Street Project, the lines separating lobbyists from GOP leadership all but disappeared. Abramoff thrived precisely because he recognized something that the Washington press corps still seems unable to: that the Republican Party's alliance with K Street made it deeply and thoroughly corruptible. ■

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NOTEBOOK

JOHN BOEHNER, K STREET WHORE . . . TOM DELAY, NO TRIP TO THE SHORE

A REFORMED REFORMER

THE RACE TO SUCCEED TOM DELAY as House Republican Majority Leader isn't exactly a study in contrasts. Both candidates, Acting Majority Leader Roy Blunt of Missouri and Ohio Representative John Boehner, are hardline social and business conservatives with similar voting records. Seeking some toehold against Blunt, Boehner has ingeniously chosen to cast himself as a reformer who can lead a battered House Republican caucus past the Jack Abramoff scandal. "I cut my teeth here as a reformer," Boehner wrote in a recent campaign-style document.

It's true, of course, that Boehner was in the so-called "Gang of Seven," a group of House Republicans who savaged Democratic leaders over the 1992 House Bank scandal. Now, that wasn't "reform" so much as shameless demagoguery of a substantively trivial offense. (Many House members overdrew checking accounts without penalty, effectively receiving small interest-free loans. Hardly Watergate.) Still, we'll grant that, back then, Boehner did rail against the corruptions of power. He once blasted Bill Clinton, for instance, for "conducting business as usual by cozying up to his fat-cat, special interest labor friends and lobbyists."

But, after House Republicans conquered the House in 1994, Boehner's views about fat cats seemed to, er, evolve. In 1995, he distributed contribution checks from a tobacco company on the House floor at a time when Congress was considering anti-tobacco legislation. He began vacationing in Florida and the Caribbean with leading business lobbyists and hosting weekly political strategy meetings with them on the Hill. Today, the dapper, cigarette-smoking Boehner is a favorite of K Street Republicans, many of whom constitute his kitchen cabinet.

Now, Boehner may be slightly cleaner than Blunt, a DeLay acolyte who is actually *married* to a lobbyist. But a reformer he ain't. Instead, he's just another example of how House Republicans became what they once professed to hate.

John Boehner

GREAT GUY, BUT I WOULDN'T GO TO HAWAII WITH HIM

THE WHITE HOUSE DIDN'T WASTE A news cycle before, in the wake of Abramoff's plea deal, it started dumping all over DeLay. "[T]op Bush advisers" told *Time* that DeLay had always been a "necessary burden" for the White House. "They have always seen him as beneath them, more blue collar," one Republican close to the president's inner circle told the magazine. "He's seen as a useful servant, not someone you would want to vacation with." So you can only imagine the gritted teeth through which Bush must have said the following:

"I'm proud of the job my fellow Texan is doing as the majority leader of the House of Representatives, Tom DeLay. He's a great majority leader." —April 1, 2004

"I know my friend from the great state of Texas, Tom DeLay, is with us tonight." —May 5, 2004

"I thank my friend from the great state of Texas, Tom DeLay, for his leadership. I appreciate you, Mr. Leader." —January 28, 2005

"I have confidence in Tom DeLay's leadership, and I have confidence in Tom DeLay. We've worked closely with Tom DeLay and the leaders in the House to get a lot done during the last four years, and I'm looking forward to working with him to get a lot done during the next four years." —March 17, 2005

"I appreciate the leadership of Congressman Tom DeLay in working on important issues that matter to the country." —April 26, 2005

But it is true: It appears that Bush has never invited DeLay to go on a vacation with him.

TONGUE-TIED

IT LOOKS LIKE BUSH, FAMOUSLY COMmunication-challenged, is getting a little bit better at language. At a conference of American university presidents on January 5, Bush unveiled his National Security Language Initiative, a much-needed scheme to attract more American students to the study of "critical languages" like Arabic, Farsi, and Korean. The initiative, inspired by projects to encourage Russian study during the cold war, would earmark $114 million in fiscal year 2007 as "seed money" to establish critical language instruction in primary schools, support college-level language training, and establish a national corps of "reserve" linguists that could be called up to serve the government during times of need.

DAVID COWLES

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With less than 2 percent of American high school students currently studying these critical languages, Bush's push to improve Americans' understanding of foreign language and culture is a step in the right direction. And it sure *looks* great in light of the flak Bush has taken for underestimating the importance of cultural sensitivity to winning hearts and minds in the war against terrorism. (Make no mistake, Bush gets it now: As he explained to his audience of academics last week, "When somebody comes to me and speaks Texan, I know they appreciate the Texas culture.")

Unfortunately, $114 million won't necessarily change America's historical lack of emphasis on the study of foreign languages, and it remains to be seen whether the lightly funded initiative will be anything more than symbolic.

To gauge the likely impact of the plan, let's play a little numbers game. Number of additional students who will study foreign languages on Gilman and Fulbright scholarships under the new initiative: about 350. Number of military linguists sacked between fiscal years 1994 and 2003 for being gay: 322 (see Nathaniel Frank, "Stonewalled," January 24, 2005). Amount of money designated to support critical language study in K–12 schools through the Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program under the new initiative: $24 million. Amount of money requested for fiscal year 2006 to fund abstinence-only education in those same schools: $206 million—$39 million more than the year before. Unfortunately, despite the fanfare, it seems anti-seed money is still more important to this administration.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

"Monkey and Morals" (December 12, 2005) wrongly identified James D. Watson as "the co-discoverer of the DNA molecule." In fact, Watson was one of the scientists who contributed to the discovery of the structure of DNA. We regret the error. ■

TNR commentary Excerpts from THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE

THREE SURPRISES FROM ALITO'S TESTIMONY.

Surprise Witness

By Ethan J. Leib

The biggest surprise of Samuel Alito's confirmation hearing thus far may be that it is actually yielding surprises. Alito's candor has complicated the caricature of him held by many on the left and right. Below, three issues where Alito's testimony offered some unexpected twists:

Executive power. Most people assumed Alito would avoid the legal status of President Bush's post–September 11 domestic spying program. But, instead of refusing to answer questions about the imbroglio, Alito made clear that his view of executive authority is nuanced—and does not necessarily support the Bush administration's position.

Alito's candor has complicated the caricature of him held by many on the left and right.

Textualism versus originalism. Asked about his approach to interpreting statutes and the Constitution, he said, "[W]here I start and often where I end is with the text." This was a surprise for two reasons. First, Alito's Third Circuit opinions do not seem to be the product of a committed textualist. Second, Alito has been associated with a movement to encourage presidents to issue statements when signing bills into law in order to facilitate judicial interpretation, something a committed textualist would avoid. When confronted with this apparent contradiction, he pleaded his dedication to textualism as a defense.

Foreign law. On the hot-button issue of whether Supreme Court justices should draw upon foreign law, Alito at first seemed to toe the conservative line, saying it would be inappropriate to consider foreign laws and foreign constitutions while interpreting our own. But then he uttered a surprising remark: that it might be appropriate to look at foreign legal sources to interpret treaties the United States has signed. That's more foreign law than most Republicans are probably comfortable with.

HOW WASHINGTON HELPED OLMERT.

Good for Nothing

By Robert Satloff

On January 25, the Palestinian Authority is scheduled to hold parliamentary elections in which the terrorist organization Hamas is expected to make a strong showing. Nonetheless, the Bush administration, which believes in the transformative nature of elections, is eager for them to proceed.

The easiest way to ensure this would be for the White House to pressure Ariel Sharon's disciple, Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, to reverse Sharon's earlier decision barring Palestinian voting in East Jerusalem. Indeed, that is precisely what Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas wants Washington to do. But such a move by the United States would have put Olmert in a no-win situation: Either he bows to Washington, in the process countermanding Sharon's policy and giving his competitors a powerful campaign issue, or he says no to Washington and faces voters as the man who flubbed his first effort at handling Israel's most important alliance.

Thankfully, Washington did the right thing: nothing. By stepping out of this tussle, the Bush team wisely let Olmert come up with his own subtle solution. According to press reports, he plans to ask his cabinet to allow the vote but prohibit any Hamas candidates from appearing on the ballot in Jerusalem. This, in turn, will force Abbas to do something he hates to do—make a decision, in this case on whether to accept the Israeli conditions for elections in Jerusalem, hold them everywhere but the Holy City, or postpone them altogether.

The Bush team wisely let Olmert come up with his own subtle solution.

* Ethan J. Leib is a law professor at the University of California's Hastings College of the Law.

* Robert Satloff is executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

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Did Alito pass his hearings?

Baited Breath

BY RYAN LIZZA

CRACKING DOWN ON lobbyists is a hot issue in Washington these days, but it hasn't quite made it to the Senate Judiciary Committee. On day one of his confirmation hearing, Samuel Alito introduced America to his fine-looking family, spread across a row behind his right shoulder. But that tall, chinless man who could be frequently glimpsed over Alito's other shoulder wasn't some Alito brother-in-law. It was Ed Gillespie, K Street's most connected post-Abramoff Republican and part of the White House's large team of Alito handlers and spinners shepherding him through the Senate.

While Alito's jargon-laden monotone seemed to have an anesthetizing effect on his critics—which explained much of his success this week—Gillespie and the White House's rapid-response operation also helped. As Democrats tried to pin down Alito on abortion, criticized him for an alleged conflict of interest, and nailed him for his executive branch sycophancy, Gillespie and his team—BlackBerries always crackling—huddled frequently with GOP senators and their aides, crafting real-time responses.

The result was that, after three days of hearings, Alito and his defenders on the Committee had successfully deflected the shotgun spray of attacks fired by Democrats. They defanged the major ethics issue—the accusation that, as a judge, Alito should have recused himself from a case involving Vanguard, a company in which he had investments—by simply pointing to the numerous legal ethicists who have declared the charge bunk. Alito's explanation of why he once argued that a police warrant empowered officers to search a ten-year-old girl at the scene of a drug bust didn't sound as extreme as it had when liberal critics first presented it. His narrow reading of the Commerce Clause, which led him to write a controversial dissent proclaiming that Congress can't regulate machine guns, hasn't turned into much of a rallying cry for a filibuster, either. But, despite the success of the K Street–led spin operation and Alito's bland geekiness, there were a few morsels in Alito's hearing transcript that Democrats could turn into filibuster bait.

THE FIRST FERTILE area for Democrats is Alito's responses to questions about *Roe* v. *Wade*. The hearings have been admirable for the honesty with which a few Republicans attacked *Roe* head-on. Senators Sam Brownback and Tom Coburn made it clear they think *Roe* was wrongly decided, is not protected by stare decisis, and should be overturned. Most Republicans agree with that analysis but refuse to say so publicly, especially in the context of a Supreme Court hearing. Alito himself didn't concur with Brownback and Coburn, but his comments should be almost as troubling for Democrats. If John Roberts's abortion code words were that *Roe* is "settled law," Alito's were that stare decisis is not an "inexorable command," an echo of a Louis Brandeis quote used by William Rehnquist in his 1992 argument for overturning *Roe*. Both Roberts and Alito left themselves wiggle room on the issue, but the "settled law" sound bite sent a message that Roberts favors the status quo. "Inexorable command," on the other hand, is a reminder that a Justice Alito would not be so deferential to precedents he finds unconstitutional. No Democrat can accuse Alito of disingenuousness if he's confirmed and one day casts a vote to reverse *Roe*.

The only issue during three days of hearings that both seemed to rattle Alito and make him seem untruthful was what he remembered about joining the now-infamous Concerned Alumni of Princeton (CAP), the group of Ivy League graduates who fought against blacks and women entering Princeton in the 1970s and 1980s. Alito bragged about his membership in the group in his 1985 Reagan administration job application, but, as he told the Judiciary Committee several times, "I have no specific recollection of joining the organization." (Whenever he said this, his muscles tightened and his face assumed an awkward hostage-like expression.) Judging from the rest of the application, Alito was a bit of a suck-up, so it's more likely that he added a mention of the group only to catch the eye of the Reagan conservatives renewing his application and now finds it untenable to admit to the deception. CAP started as an issue about Alito's views on race, but it has turned into an issue about his credibility—one that Democrats could find useful as part of a larger filibuster argument.

But, rather than fight about abortion or Princeton admissions, the Democrats could try to ignite a grander ideological battle over the odd and timely issue that dominated many exchanges in the hearings: "the unitary executive theory." (How long before Frank Luntz re-brands this scary-sounding phrase?) The unitary executive theory, popularized by Federalist Society founder Steven Calabresi, traces its origins to the monarchist sympathies of Alexander Hamilton and posits that the president is constitutionally entitled to total control over the executive branch. In the Reagan administration, when the idea first took flight among conservatives, it was used largely to argue that Congress's ability to insulate executive branch agencies from presidential meddling should be curtailed. The Bush White House has seized upon that argument with relish, referencing it in numerous signing statements. And other officials—such as Dick Cheney's chief of staff, David Addington, and former Justice Department appointee John Yoo—have also expanded the thesis to justify many of the president's terrorism-related decisions.

Like Bush, Alito is a unitarian, as devotees of the theory are known. "We were strong proponents of the theory of the unitary executive, that all federal executive power is

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vested by the Constitution in the president," he said in a speech to the Federalist Society in 2000. "And I thought then, and I still think, that this theory best captures the meaning of the Constitution's text and structure." For Democrats, Alito's deference to the president and his worship of Article II might be attractive grounds on which to try to stop his nomination. After all, Democrats note, the argument has the advantage of dovetailing with their current critique of Bush as an unchecked, out-of-control president, as well as their case against the "corrupt" GOP congressional leadership that acts as a rubber stamp for Bush policies. Under this scenario, stopping Alito could turn into a proxy war for stopping Bush. Which is one reason that a filibuster, though not a likely scenario, might still tempt Democrats. ■

Viktor Bout and the Pentagon.

Air America

BY DOUGLAS FARAH AND KATHI AUSTIN

JUST AFTER DAWN on November 26, 2004, a small team of U.N. investigators—tracking aviation companies illicitly ferrying weapons to warring militias in the jungles of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—arrived at the makeshift headquarters of a South African peacekeeping contingent in Goma. The investigators roused the armed guards to provide protection for an unprecedented and audacious move—a snap inspection of the aging aircraft lining the grassy field beside a nearby airstrip littered with volcanic ash.

Charged with finding violators of the U.N.-mandated arms embargo, the investigators discovered aircraft using false registrations to deliver weapons to remote airstrips that funnel supplies into the war zone. In one case, an airplane was using a valid Kazakhstani registration prefix, "UN" (UN-79954), which fooled many people into thinking its illicit cargo deliveries were U.N. flights. In exchange for the weapons, the aircraft were flying out illegally mined tin ore and coltan, a mineral used to make cell phone and laptop components.

Their Russian crews, arriving in dilapidated minibuses, were stunned by the U.N. officials' demands to inspect the airplanes' cargo and flight documents. As the day grew warmer, more airplanes landed, and soon investigators and peacekeepers were running up and down the pocked, blistering tarmac to keep planes from taking off before the inspections were completed. Some tense standoffs ensued, with the Russian aircrews occasionally threatening the investigators, indicating that they knew the whereabouts of one official's family members. Some of the planes escaped the airstrip with the aid of Congolese military officers, flying off to unknown destinations. But, over two days, the investigators managed to pore over the cargo and records of 26 aircraft.

The guns-for-minerals pipeline bore the hallmarks of Viktor Bout, a notorious Russian arms dealer who operates one of the largest private air fleets in the world. Bout has made millions flying lethal cargo to many of the world's worst elements, from former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia to Rwandan *genocidaires*. Bout's activities are so egregious that Peter Hain, a British cabinet minister, publicly branded him "Africa's chief merchant of death."

After years of prompting by the United Nations, President Bush issued an executive order in July 2004 making it illegal for any American person or institution to do business "directly or indirectly" with Charles Taylor's associates, including Bout. Nine months later, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) ordered the freezing of the U.S. assets of 30 Bout-related companies, along with those of his U.S.-based partner, his brother, and two other associates. The United Nations had already taken similar action against Bout, who has been wanted by Interpol since 2002 on an outstanding warrant for laundering the proceeds of illicit weapons sales.

The punitive actions were based on Bout's relationship with Taylor, but, in announcing the OFAC action, the Treasury Department stressed another facet of Bout's activities, noting that he made $50 million in profits from arms transfers to the Taliban when the regime was hosting Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The Treasury statement also said Bout had used his aircraft to "transport tanks, helicopters, and weapons by the tons" all over the world and helped "fuel conflicts and support U.N.-sanctioned regimes in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Sudan."

Yet, remarkably, given this record and the international efforts to shut him down, Bout also counts among his clients the U.S. military and its contractors in Iraq, NATO forces in Afghanistan, and the United Nations in Sudan. THE NEW REPUBLIC has learned that the Defense Department has largely turned a blind eye to Bout's activities and has continued to supply him with contracts, in violation of the executive order and despite the fact that other, more legitimate air carriers are available. Revenues from these flights enable Bout to carry on the profitable business of nurturing conflicts in other, less covered parts of the world, threatening further international instability.

EUROPEAN AND U.S. intelligence sources tell us they have identified at least three new Bout-controlled companies—based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)—that have been hired by the U.S. military and its contractors in the past four months for flights into Iraq. Two of the companies have taken aircraft formerly belonging to companies designated by Treasury as illegal and reregistered them under new names in Moldova. Another company did the same thing in Cyprus,

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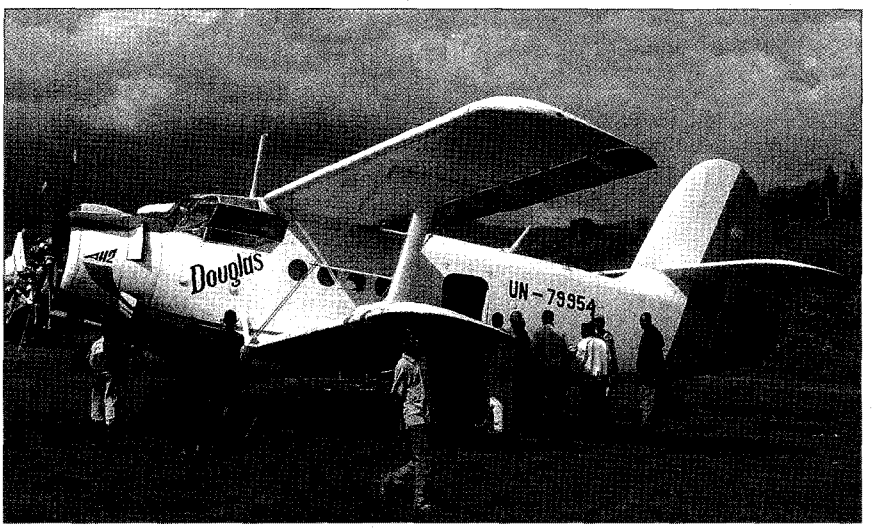
the officials say. That company actually kept the same telephone number and address as one of the firms blacklisted by Treasury. Only the name on the door changed.

Even some of the designated air companies continue to operate unimpeded. Irbis Air Company, which is on the OFAC list, reportedly placed a bid with Halliburton earlier this month to fly goods into Iraq, two sources monitoring Bout's activities in Sharjah tell us. It is not known whether Irbis won the contract. Halliburton did not respond to requests for comment, but, in the past, it has said that any use of Bout aircraft was inadvertent and that contracts with suspected companies had been immediately terminated.



This plane used the registration prefix "UN" to pass itself off as a relief flight. It was actually being used by Viktor Bout's network to traffic weapons illegally in central Africa. Among Bout's other clients? The United States military.

Spokesmen for U.S. Central Command and the Pentagon brushed off inquiries on the subject, saying they knew of no contracts with Bout-related companies. At the same time, they stressed the need to understand how complex contracting arrangements were in Iraq. The Pentagon, a military official said, could not check out the subcontractors who actually flew the flights into Iraq and Afghanistan.

This attitude reflects a larger problem in putting Bout out of business. American officials tracking Bout tell us that many military officials feel they do not have the resources or the time to check aircraft records when a flight may contain badly needed ammunition or matériel. "They don't check because they don't care," says a civilian official who helped trace Bout's Iraq contracts with the U.S. military. "On the ground, what they care about is getting what they need. Unfortunately, this short-term mentality means that they may, in fact, be breaking the law."

But Bout's flights for the U.S. government—and other legitimate clients like NATO and the United Nations—do more than merely break the letter of international law. They provide Bout with cash that helps fund his gunrunning to conflict zones like the DRC, where the steady supply of weapons helps sustain a conflict that is destabilizing much of Africa. U.S. and European intelligence sources tell us they are also investigating whether Bout's network is behind the thousands of new weapons surfacing in the hands of brutal militias in the Niger Delta region. Those militias pose a growing threat to stability in an area that provides around 10 percent of U.S. oil.

Douglas Farah was the West Africa bureau chief for THE WASHINGTON POST *from 2000–2002. He is currently writing a book on Viktor Bout. Kathi Austin is an arms-trafficking expert who worked with U.N. panels of experts in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she investigated Bout's activities.*

While Congress has oversight responsibility for implementation of the OFAC list, its enforcement efforts have been sparse. Wisconsin Democratic Senator Russell Feingold first raised the issue of Bout's coalition military contracts on May 18, 2004, in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing. Feingold asked then–Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and then–Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage about reports of U.S. military links to Bout's companies. It took Wolfowitz eight months to respond. In a January 31, 2005, letter to Feingold, Wolfowitz acknowledged that "both the U.S. Army and the Coalition Provisional Authority (in Iraq) did conduct business with companies that, in turn, subcontracted work to second tier suppliers who leased aircraft owned by companies associated with Mr. Bout. ... Although we are aware of a few companies that are connected to Mr. Bout, most notably Air Bas and Jetline, we suspect Mr. Bout has other companies or enterprises unknown to the Government."

In fact, as the *Los Angeles Times* first reported in 2004, Bout aircraft were in constant motion into Iraq after the invasion. A single Bout company, Irbis, flew more than 140 flights into Iraq for the U.S. military and its contractors by the end of 2004.

Representative Sue Kelly, a New York Republican who chairs the Congressional Anti-Terrorist Financing Task Force, said in a statement to TNR that she felt a "considerable degree of frustration" over efforts to end U.S. contracts with Bout. Congressional investigators tell us that it is almost impossible to get answers on Bout from the Bush administration. And it took six months—until early December—for the OFAC list of sanctioned Bout-related companies to be fully synchronized with the U.N. list, thereby making it internationally binding. Robert Werner, the director of OFAC, said getting the OFAC list incorporated into the U.N. sanctions list was "a truly significant success in our

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continuing effort to combat Bout's arms-trafficking and sanctions-busting activities."

In reality, however, the move was largely symbolic. During the time between the U.S. designation and the U.N. listing, according to U.S. and European intelligence sources, Bout revamped his operations, moving aircraft registrations and incorporating new companies. As a result, most of the designated companies no longer have any assets to be frozen, and it will take months to identify the new companies and begin sanctioning them.

THE U.S MILITARY has, from time to time, made efforts to scrub Bout-associated companies and aircraft from its list of contractors and subcontractors. In May, after the OFAC list went into effect, the Pentagon asked all companies and contractors applying for flights into Iraq and Afghanistan to reregister with a form that required detailed information on the aircraft and its owners. As a result, several of Bout's companies were denied permission to fly.

As slow and incomplete as these U.S. efforts have been, they are far better than those of other nations. Russia, for example, has failed to move against Bout, despite the Interpol arrest warrant for him. His assets remain untouched, and he reportedly lives in the open in Moscow, frequently dining at a favorite sushi restaurant. Since 1999, the UAE, from which most of Bout's aircraft operate, has consistently rebuffed requests by American officials to help identify Bout-associated companies. The British military acknowledges hiring, through contractors, Bout aircraft on seven occasions in 2005.

Bout's companies are hard to track because he constantly shifts his airplanes' registrations and the companies that own them. For instance, in Africa, he first registered his aircraft in Liberia and then moved their registrations to the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Moldova, and other countries which are far from main aviation hubs. But the U.N.'s DRC operation showed that tracking Bout's aircraft is possible. Airplanes and crews have records—such as airworthiness certificates, insurance records, and logbooks—that are difficult to falsify and can be requested for inspection whenever an aircraft lands. Holes or inconsistencies in these records are relatively easy to detect, and they helped identify Bout's DRC and Liberian operations.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF Bout's continuing operations have been devastating, both in human terms and for U.S. foreign interests. His network thrives because, while some dedicated public servants try to shut it down, there is no concerted effort to put Bout out of business. Perhaps there are too many people who feel they need to keep him around to fly into the next Iraq or Afghanistan. The Bush administration and the United Nations say they want to remove a threat to international peace. Rewarding Bout with lucrative contracts makes a farce of that goal. ■

The scourge of fake diplomas.

Degree Burns

BY CLAY RISEN

IT WAS EARLY 2003, and the newly created Department of Homeland Security was looking for someone to help oversee its vast computer network. The department soon found a candidate who appeared to be a perfect match: Laura Callahan. Not only had Callahan been working with federal IT systems since the mid-'80s, but she came with outstanding academic credentials: bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science, topped by a Ph.D. in computer information systems. In April 2003, Callahan was brought on as the department's senior director in the office of the chief information officer, pulling down a six-figure salary.

But Callahan didn't last long. A few weeks after her hiring, the Office of Personnel Management opened an investigation into her resumé following the publication of articles questioning her degrees' provenance. It turned out that Callahan's vaunted academic achievements were anything but—all three degrees had come from Hamilton University, a now-defunct degree mill operating out of a former Motel 6 in Evanston, Wyoming, that claimed religious affiliation. In June 2003, she was placed on administrative leave. By the time she resigned, in March 2004, a new picture of Callahan had emerged: not a skilled IT executive, but an unqualified hack.

Degree mills differ, but all sell academic credentials for little or no work. So how was Callahan able to advance with three bogus degrees on her CV? Part of the answer may lie in the fact that Callahan insists she was scammed as well. One of the more elaborate degree frauds, Hamilton University (not to be confused with the well-regarded Hamilton College in upstate New York) "required" online coursework for her bachelor's and master's and a dissertation for her doctorate; while her work was never evaluated, from Callahan's perspective, the requirements made Hamilton seem legit. She had even checked to make sure Hamilton was an accredited university. And it was—by the American Council of Private Colleges and Universities (ACPCU), whose mission was "to establish and enforce strict academic, ethical, financial and evaluative standards." This was enough for her, and probably enough for anyone else who thought to casually check out the obscure institution. Alas, had Callahan gone a step further, she would have found that the ACPCU was, itself, a scam. Even its religious affiliation was but a means to skirt state laws. The ACPCU, she later wrote, "appeared to be run by the same people who operated the religious organization sponsoring the university. In other words, the accrediting body was an 'accreditation mill.' "

There are basically two types of students in the degree-mill world: those who are in on the scam, and those, like

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Callahan, who get scammed. But, for employers and the public, the difference doesn't really matter. Thanks to the growing importance of credentials for professional advancement and the ease of Internet access, the nation's 2,000-plus mills have become a $500 million per year business, according to degree-mill expert John Bear—and that means a growing number of people performing jobs for which they are untrained and unqualified. That's one thing if the employees are just, say, managing a local business. It's quite another when they're responsible for national security.

In 2003, a deputy undersecretary for personnel and readiness at the Pentagon was outed for having a fake degree; he, too, insisted that he never suspected anything was wrong, because the school claimed to be accredited. A 2004 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found 463 federal employees alone with degrees from three mills, including 28 senior-level employees at, among other places, Homeland Security and the National Nuclear Security Administration. The investigation found "a couple hundred people in the Department of Defense," says Alan Contreras, who oversees degree authorization for the state of Oregon. "They found so many that they simply decided it was not politically possible to do anything about it." Protecting the public from hacks will require not just a crackdown on the wayward students who acquire fraudulent degrees, but also a renewed push against the mills that supply them—which means going after fake accreditors as well.

PEOPLE FAMILIAR WITH ivy-covered walls and cavernous lecture halls are often surprised to learn how massively the Internet has changed higher education. Thanks to high-speed connections, video cams, and free e-mail, there are few things you can get at a brick-and-mortar school that you can't find online. In many ways, this is a decidedly good thing, allowing thousands to afford and attend academic programs they might otherwise find inaccessible. And, on one level, it has also made it simpler to check up on a program's quality. Indeed, Bear, who co-wrote *Degree Mills* with retired FBI degree-mill expert Allen Ezell, says that awareness of potential academic frauds is way up, thanks to consumer activism and the ease of researching an institution online. After all, it takes just a few clicks to see whether Adam Smith University, for example, is merely obscure or truly fraudulent. "With the arrival of the Internet, it's been possible for people to check out what is a real school and what isn't more rapidly," says University of Illinois Physics Professor George Gollin, who has spent several years compiling data on degree mills.

But mill operators have gone high-tech, too. Once the province of lone operators with printers on their kitchen tables and ads on matchbook covers, today's degree mills are slick websites, often complete with bios of nonexistent faculty, chat rooms, even .edu suffixes for their URLs. "The people running these things are getting more clever," says Bear. "It's big-time stuff, answering the needs of the market." And, of course, they've created their own accreditation bodies—though most are little more than Web pages citing rigorous, though undefined, accrediting "standards." Officially, accreditation bodies are approved by either the Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a nonprofit whose mission is to watch the watchers, so to speak. But, unfortunately, neither Education nor CHEA has a monopoly on the use of the term "accreditation." Unlike terms like "free" and "low tar," there are no federal regulations on how "accreditation" is used. (The Federal Trade Commission has written guidelines for the term, but they do not have the force of law.) As a result, in recent years, some 200 fake accreditors have popped up.

Most accreditation scams resemble the ACPCU: fronts that exist solely to give cover to a particular degree mill. Take Breyer State University. It is licensed in Alabama; it has an affiliation with a shady medical-degree mill on the tiny Caribbean island of Montserrat; and it is operated by Dominick Flarey, who lives near Youngstown, Ohio. All of this should raise some red flags, but Breyer State has nevertheless "graduated" hundreds of proud students, many of whom were likely mollified by the school's seemingly sterling accreditation from the Central States Consortium of Colleges and Schools (CSCCS), an affiliate of the American Institute of Healthcare Professionals (AIHP). Such innocuous, official-sounding titles likely prevent most students and employers from looking further; when they do, they learn that both the CSCCS and the AIHP are themselves fronts—and, like Breyer State itself, are run by Flarey. "It lets him fool people into thinking that his school has been properly evaluated," says Gollin. Flarey's accreditation subsidiary is convenient, because it is unlikely that any legitimate accreditor would approve of Breyer State awarding degrees for "life experience" or allowing students to "self-design" their own Ph.D. programs. (Flarey rejected the charge that Breyer State is a degree mill. "People can call us a diploma mill; that doesn't make it so," he says. "Some will say any school that isn't accredited is a degree mill. But accreditation is a voluntary process.")

Then there are people like Maxine Asher. An elderly resident of the posh Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, Asher has run her own degree mill, American World University, since 1990. (Once incorporated in Iowa, it now operates out of Pascagoula, Mississippi.) But, in 1993, after repeatedly running up against potential students demanding credentials, she hit on the idea of creating her own accreditor, the World Association of Universities and Colleges. (In an interview, Asher denied that American World was a degree mill and said she was the victim of hostile state regulators.) But, rather than simply accrediting American World, Asher realized she had another revenue stream on her hands. And so, for $1,500 (on top of a $1,000 membership fee), she offers to "accredit" other schools based on self-evaluations; "accredited" schools then pay a $3,500 annual membership fee. Today, the World Association claims to have 69 members, 40 of which are "accredited." "People realized that's a whole profit center in itself," says Bear.

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BECAUSE THE DEMAND for employees with academic credentials is only going to increase, the government needs to take steps to ensure the verification of those credentials. But, despite the alarm raised by Callahan's degrees and the GAO report, little has been done to crack down on degree and accreditation mills. In 2004, Senator Susan Collins held hearings on whether federal money was being spent on degree-mill courses, but her hearings attracted little attention; at times, she was the only senator present. And, while the Department of Education has created a database of accredited schools and accreditors, the system has at times been rife with errors. Meanwhile, in 1991, the FBI shut down its successful anti–degree mill operation (known as DipScam) when its director, Ezell, retired. Overall, the feds' efforts have been "limited, poor, and inefficient," says Contreras. "It's a low priority for everybody."

But, as Callahan's case makes clear, it *should* be a priority. It's hardly in the national interest to have unqualified people overseeing security-related computer systems and Pentagon personnel. And, yet, some of the biggest concentrations of fake degrees are in crucial departments like Homeland Security, Defense, and Energy. While the GAO study identified more than 450 fake-degree holders in the federal government, it noted the numbers could be much higher. "We believe that the agencies are not able to accurately determine the number of their employees who have diploma mill degrees," wrote the authors.

The problem extends well beyond the Beltway. In recent years, countless doctors, teachers, and even college and university executives have been exposed for having fraudulent degrees. There's the Florida fire department training commander caught last year with a degree in fire science from Suffield University, a mill "accredited" by the bogus National Distance Learning Accreditation Council. Ten teachers and a principal in Georgia were caught with fake degrees from the now-defunct St. Regis University. And, in 2002, a North Carolina doctor with a fake medical degree was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and practicing without a license for taking a child off insulin, killing her. "If you don't want bridges designed by people with fake degrees and children going to doctors with degrees from some unknown Caribbean island, we need as a society to protect the degrees that provide those credentials," says Contreras.

To their credit, some degree mills, such as Breyer State, acknowledge that their accreditation is not officially recognized. But they, in turn, exploit the lack of enforced standards by noting, "There is no mandate by federal law for a School, College, or University to be accredited. ... [E]ach accreditor has their own unique standards and, thus, there is no national consistency in institutional accreditation." This is, to put it nicely, extremely disingenuous, leading applicants to assume that accreditation from Breyer State's csccs is as good as that from a federally recognized body. And, until the feds get serious about accreditation, degree mills like Breyer State and American World will continue to scam students, employers, and the government itself. ■

Boys and books.

Boy Trouble

BY RICHARD WHITMIRE

IT'S BEEN A year since Harvard President Larry Summers uttered some unfortunate speculations about why so few women hold elite professorships in the sciences. During Summers's speech, a biologist, overwhelmed by the injustice of it all, nearly collapsed with what George F. Will unkindly described as the vapors. Since that odd January day, Summers has been rebuked with a faculty no-confidence vote, untold talk-show hosts have weighed in, and 936 stories about the controversy have appeared in newspapers and magazines (according to LexisNexis). Impressive response, especially considering the modest number of these professorships available.

Compare that with what happened after the U.S. Department of Education, also about a year ago, released a 100-plus-page report weighing academic progress by gender. The results were bracing. Nearly every chart told the same story. Boys are over 50 percent more likely than girls to repeat grades in elementary school, one-third more likely to drop out of high school, and twice as likely to be identified with a learning disability. The response? Near-total silence.

What's most worrisome are not long-standing gender differences but recent plunges in boys' relative performance. Between 1992 and 2002, the gap by which high school girls outperformed boys on tests in both reading and writing—especially writing—widened significantly. Given the reading and writing demands of today's college curriculum, that means a lot of boys out there are falling well short of being considered "college material." Which is why women now significantly outnumber men on college campuses, a phenomenon familiar enough to any sorority sister seeking a date to the next formal. This June, nearly six out of ten bachelor's degrees awarded will go to women. If the Department of Education's report is any indication, in coming years, this gender gap will grow even larger.

The report illustrates a dramatic and unsolved mystery: At some point in the early '80s, boys' relative academic records and aspirations took a downward turn. So far, no one has come up with a good explanation for this trend, but it's a story that affects millions of boys and their families. And yet, according to LexisNexis, the report was cited by name in only five newspaper and magazine articles.

Not only has there been little media attention to this cri-

Richard Whitmire, a USA TODAY *editorial writer, researched this issue while a fellow with the Journalism Fellowships in Child and Family Policy at the University of Maryland.*

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sis in boys' education, but there has been surprisingly little research. And the conventional wisdom offered up to explain the problem—boys play too many video games and listen to too much hip-hop music—can't explain a gender slide that's affecting not just the United States but much of the developed West. It also can't explain why boys in a few schools manage to duck the gender gap. But promising new answers have begun to surface—and from some very unlikely places.

WHAT WE KNOW for certain about this mostly ignored gender trend comes from surveys that measure the academic attitudes of teen students. In the early '80s, boys and girls were almost evenly matched in their college ambitions. A decade later, everything had changed. Academic aspirations for girls soared as those of boys pretty much flatlined. And the trend has continued, with girls who say they plan to go to college or graduate school now far outnumbering boys. Among female high school seniors, 62.4 percent said they definitely planned to graduate from a four-year college program, compared with 51.1 percent of male high school seniors, according to a 2001 survey by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.

A few things about this mystery are known. The gender gap between boys' and girls' academic achievement has long existed in the black community. Nearly twice as many black women as black men attend college, according to the latest numbers from the Department of Education. But, in recent years, the slippage broadened to the white middle class. American Council on Education researcher Jacqueline King has produced data showing startling shifts among middle-class white college students. Only eight years ago, the campus gender balance for this group (incomes $30,000 to $70,000) was an even 50–50. As of last year, the proportion of white men had dropped to 43 percent. In middle-class suburbs, it's common to hear parents wondering out loud why their daughters go to the colleges of their choice while their sons struggle to get into second-tier schools.

What's happening in those homes is itself something of a puzzle. Patrick Welsh, an English teacher at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C., offered the outside world a glimpse in a piece he wrote for *The Washington Post* in 2003. Welsh described his bafflement over privileged white boys who felt obligated to party too much and study too little. Their most obvious role models for how seriously to take life appeared to be popular rap artists.

But, as Welsh pointed out, even these underperforming boys nearly always landed a spot in some college. That's due to one of the best-kept secrets in college admissions today: the affirmative action campaign to recruit men. Most admissions directors sifting through stacks of applications from men and women can only sigh at the contrast. The average male applicant has far lower grades, writes a sloppy essay, and sports few impressive extracurriculars. Those admissions directors face a choice: Either admit less-qualified men or see the campus gender balance slip below 40 percent male, a point at which female applicants begin to look elsewhere.

What little research has been done on this shift in the gender gap falls roughly into two camps—the feminists and the pragmatists. The feminist viewpoint is summarized in "Raising and Educating Healthy Boys: A Report on the Growing Crisis in Boys' Education." This study, performed by the Educational Equity Center at the Academy for Educational Development and published last March, effectively asks: Why can't boys be more like girls? Boys are locked into a masculinity box, the feminist researchers say. Most boys stay inside that box, living by a macho boy code that precludes developing the "language of feelings" needed to express themselves or relate to teachers. Boys who break out of this box are doomed to a life of teasing and being bullied. In other words, young boys never get sufficiently acquainted with their feelings to write A-rated essays.

Expecting boys to become more like girls, however, will strike parents of boys as a bit odd—especially liberal parents who swore they'd never give their children violent toys, only to watch their sons mold clumps of clay into submachine guns.

The pragmatists, mostly male researchers, peer inside the school door and see a feminized world that needs tweaking. Professor Jeffrey Wilhelm, co-author of *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*, decries the dearth of boy-friendly reading material. Most literature classes demand that students explore their emotions (not a strong point for boys).

Other pragmatists point to the simple things: Basing grades on turning in homework on time guarantees lower grades for boys. Studies consistently show boys have more trouble than girls turning in homework on time. Some educators and parents explain this by saying that many boys simply forget or decline to turn in completed homework. Here's the boy-thinking: If I answered the homework question to my satisfaction, the task is done. Why turn it in? If you're the parent of a girl, that may sound bizarre. It isn't. Parents of slumping boys know differently.

THE PROBLEM WITH these theories is that they can't explain the rare cases in which schools have managed to keep boys' learning on par with that of girls. The Education Trust, a Washington-based education reform group that looks after the education interests of less privileged students, scoured the nation for gender success stories and turned up Indian River School District in rural Delaware. Indian River's Frankford Elementary appears to be an unlikely candidate for achieving any sort of academic success, let alone overcoming the gap between boys' and girls' achievement: 76 percent of the students qualify for subsidized lunches, 22 percent land in special education, and 64 percent are either Latino or black. Most of the Latinos are sons and

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daughters of Mexican agricultural workers who have limited English skills.

And, yet, here's Frankford's 2004 state report card for fifth-graders: 100 percent of boys and 95 percent of girls meet state reading standards. When I contacted them, school leaders expressed pride at their success in educating poor and minority students but appeared bewildered when told they had conquered the gender gap. Turns out their education strategy had nothing to do with getting boys in touch with their feelings or eliminating late-homework penalties. Rather, the strategy was a roll-up-your-sleeves effort initially sparked by a state campaign to improve literacy skills. Students whose problems were identified early received extra help from teachers. A special eye was kept on black boys. Most important, no excuses were accepted—when boys fell behind, teachers weren't allowed to consider that the norm.

While the national research into this issue is dismal, a handful of individual researchers have turned up some important discoveries. The culprit they identify has little to do with the influence of anti-academic hip-hop music, too many video games, or the sometimes exasperating tendency of boys to be boys. The key appears to be literacy skills.

Ken Hilton is an unlikely pioneer in gender-gap research. Hilton is a statistician who works out of a small cinderblock office in the administration building of the Rush-Henrietta schools in the suburbs of Rochester, New York. Six years ago, then–school board member Dirk Hightower showed up to see his son inducted into the National Honor Society. What he saw was a long line of girls moving across the stage: "I heard nothing but heels clicking," Hightower recalls. Concerned about the obvious gender gap, Hightower asked Hilton what was going on. Hilton couldn't answer Hightower's question, but vowed to get to the bottom of it. Hilton is a pocket-protector kind of guy who arrives at his half-basement office every Sunday to catch up on work. When he promises results, he delivers. Now, six years later, Hilton has some of the best research into the gender gap available anywhere. (Though it hasn't been published or peer-reviewed.) And he seems barely aware of this. I'm the first national reporter even to inquire.

Hilton conducted a series of studies, culminating in the summer of 2004 with a large survey of 21 school districts across New York state. Twelve were blue-collar and middle-class districts just like Rush-Henrietta. Another nine were among the wealthiest school districts in the state. Here is what Hilton found: In the first group, the blue-collar and middle-class schools, girls not only excelled in verbal skills but each year put a little more academic distance between themselves and the boys. Even in math, long thought to be a male stronghold, girls did better. But the real leap for girls was in reading. Another significant find: In these districts, the big hit boys take in reading happens in middle school, as they hit puberty. That's when a modest gap in verbal skills evident in elementary school doubles in size. As for the wealthy schools, more on them later.

Combine Hilton's local research with national neuroscience research, and you arrive at this: The brains of men and women are very different. Last spring, *Scientific American* summed up the best gender and brain research, including a study demonstrating that women have greater neuron density in the temporal lobe cortex, the region of the brain associated with verbal skills. Now we've reached the heart of the mystery. Girls have genetic advantages that make them better readers, especially early in life. And, now, society is favoring verbal skills. Even in math, the emphasis has shifted away from guy-friendly problems involving quick calculations to word and logic problems.

Increasingly, teachers ask students to keep written journals, even as early as kindergarten. What gets written isn't polished prose, but it is important training, say teachers, some of whom rely on the book *Kid Writing*, which advocates the use of writing to teach children basic skills in a host of subjects. The teachers are only doing their jobs, preparing their students for a work world that has moved rapidly away from manufacturing and agriculture and into information-based work. It's not that schools have changed their ways to favor girls; it's that they haven't changed their ways to help boys adjust to this new world.

Suddenly, the anecdotal evidence becomes obvious. Open the door of any ninth-grade "academy" that some school districts run—the clump of students predicted to sink in high school—and you'll see a potential football team. Nearly all guys. Ninth grade is where boys' verbal deficit becomes an albatross that stymies further male academic achievement. That's the year guys run into the fruits of the school-reform movement that date back to the 1989 governors' summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, where Democrats and Republicans vowed to shake up schools. One outcome of the summit is that, starting in ninth grade, every student now gets a verbally drenched curriculum that is supposed to better prepare them for college. Good goal, but it's leaving boys in the dust.

The findings of the other researchers all play roles here. The feminists are right to finger macho, anti-reading attitudes of boys, especially in blue-collar districts. Patrick Welsh isn't wrong to cite the influence of hip-hop music. It's just that these are lesser players within a larger landscape.

Those who continue to argue that toxic American culture is to blame may be unaware that this is a phenomenon that afflicts many post-industrial Western countries. A 2002 study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development found low academic performance to be more of a problem among boys than girls in 19 of 27 countries. Special problems were found in Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. In 21 of the 27 countries, the number of women graduating from university exceeded the number of men.

But why are some boys faring better than others and a few schools managing to level the gender playing field? Hilton's research on the wealthiest schools is revealing. Girls still do better in verbal skills in those districts. But

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Hilton discovered an important distinction. When the wealthy boys enter middle school, they don't lose ground. And that holds steady through high school.

Why the smaller verbal gender gaps in upper-income families? Hilton can only feel his way on this one, in part by drawing lessons from his own family, which teems with educators. At nights and on weekends, Hilton saw his father reading, just as the boys hitting puberty in the wealthiest districts see their well-educated fathers reading. If your father reads, it's not viewed as a sissy thing, as it's seen by many blue-collar students. Not only would that explain why the verbal gap doesn't widen for boys in the wealthiest districts, but it would also explain why the Harvards and Princetons and Stanfords have no trouble drawing talented men. Those schools run close to a 50–50 gender balance among undergraduates.

REVERSING THE ACADEMIC underachievement among most boys may require an old-fashioned assault on poor reading skills. Frankford Elementary managed that, but even Indian River boys begin to lose ground in middle school, the black hole of U.S. education. Maybe Maryland has a partial answer. The state has been breaking out its test-score data by gender since 1992, which is why Maryland Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick is dismayed by the gender gaps she sees—72 percent of girls read at a proficient or advanced level by eighth grade, compared with 61 percent of boys.

Here's part of the Grasmick plan: Take existing comic books and graphic novels deemed to cover academic disciplines and sprinkle them around classrooms. Let the boys believe they're pulling a fast one on the teachers by grabbing a quick read. Sounds bizarre, but it's based on good hunches: Boys who become successful readers in high school often attribute that success to making a transition from comic books to school books in late elementary school. Why not offer curriculum–as–comic books? It just might work. It also might not. But at least Maryland is trying, which is better than most states.

Another solution lies with teachers' colleges, which, to date, have been part of the problem. Michael Gurian, author of *Boys and Girls Learn Differently!*, says his survey of education classes reveals that 99 percent fail to offer courses on biological learning differences. There is decent research on this, but it is rarely passed along to teachers.

Any solution to the problem must begin by acknowledging that it exists. And, unfortunately, the crisis in boys' education is woefully underexposed. Partly, that is understandable. Reporters look around their world and see men dominant in academics, business, and politics. What's to worry about? Plenty, as it turns out. Nearly all those male leaders now at the top of their field earned at least a bachelor's degree. And, in today's information world, a bachelor's degree is just a starting point. But, each year, fewer and fewer men make it to that starting line. That's a problem that merits attention—at least more than five articles. ■

Ramallah Dispatch

Disengaged

BY ISABEL KERSHNER

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, it is raining hard at the Muqata, the former Ramallah headquarters—and now the burial place—of Yasir Arafat. The courtyard has become a building site. The Palestinian Authority (P.A.) is constructing a vast mausoleum and mosque around Arafat's tomb, which now stands on a muddy island, unreachable by the trickle of visitors. A short ride away, Arafat's old nemesis, Ariel Sharon, lies in a medically induced coma at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. A young Palestinian guard in a khaki uniform who keeps watch over Arafat's tomb, and who calls himself Muhammad, absentmindedly twiddles an olive sprig plucked from one of several dwarf-sized olive trees planted around it. To Israelis, olive trees signify peace; to the Palestinians, they are a symbol of *sumud*, or steadfastness on the land. When I ask Muhammad what he thinks about Sharon's condition, he shrugs. Pressed for an opinion, he says: "It will be better if he dies. He was no good for the Palestinians."

Muhammad's lack of sympathy for Sharon is typical around these parts. Just a few weeks ago, veteran Palestine Liberation Organization spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif told me that Sharon was "a criminal and a butcher." Most Palestinians will remember Sharon not for dismantling settlements but for building them; for his 50-year war against the Palestinian "resistance," resulting in massacres from Qibya to Sabra and Shatila; and, more recently, for his unilateralist construction of the West Bank separation barrier or "wall." "Some of us may have wished him well, just to be polite," says Palestinian Authority Minister of Planning Ghassan Khatib.

But inherent in the shrug with which Muhammad initially responds to my question is an ambivalence that reflects a more general attitude here—a belief that, in the end, Sharon's stroke will probably neither help nor hinder the Palestinian cause. For most ordinary Palestinians, on the eve of their own parliamentary elections on January 25—the first in ten years, barring last-minute cancelation—Sharon's sudden exit from the political stage makes no difference at all. That, they say, is because they are already living their worst-case scenario, one in which they are out of hope and no longer able to envision a peace with Israel or an independent state that will be negotiated on their terms. The sense is that, with Sharon's unilateralism or his deter-

Isabel Kershner is an associate editor at THE JERUSALEM REPORT *and author of* BARRIER: THE SEAM OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT.

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mination to shape the future without engaging the Palestinians, Israel has turned its back on them. The election will not be about Israeli-Palestinian relations, but rather purely about the Palestinians themselves.

TODAY IT IS Sharon who is incapacitated. But, 14 months ago, it was Arafat who was lying in a coma in a Paris hospital. At that time, too, Ramallah residents shrugged and said things like, "Allah gives, and Allah takes away." That was because Arafat had already effectively abdicated as a leader, having holed up in the Muqata and left his people to their fate. Once he was buried, a Palestinian public opinion survey carried out in December 2004 by respected Ramallah pollster and analyst Khalil Shikaki indicated that optimism about the future was on the rise. Arafat, the "obstacle to peace," had been removed, and, overnight, Shikaki says, an additional 15 percent of Palestinians saw a renewed possibility of reconciliation.

But Sharon's government declared Mahmoud Abbas, Arafat's successor, a "nonpartner" for his failure to act against the Palestinian terrorism networks. Unless that situation changes, the assumption in Jerusalem is that Israel will feel free to continue on a unilateralist path, ultimately dictating Israel's final borders, and, by implication, the confines of a reduced Palestinian state. In a December 2005 survey, Shikaki found that his ongoing optimism index had gone down to "the level of the worst days," bulldozed into a state of deep skepticism and ennui.

Yasir Ayad, who runs the Flowers Supermarket across from the Muqata, is convinced that Sharon's stroke will not change anything. "They have a map from 50 years ago," he says of the Israelis, "and they are going with it. The plan is to take over not only Palestine, but all the Arab world. They're all the same—Sharon, [Ehud] Barak, [Bibi] Netanyahu, [Shimon] Peres. There's no difference between them."

AS THEY HAVE become increasingly alienated from Israel as a result of Sharon-style unilateralism, the Palestinians, mired in poverty and armed chaos, are trying to take their future into their own hands. The issues dominating the upcoming election illustrate that. Ramallah is festooned with campaign posters. None of them, however, promise—or even mention—peace. Arafat's protégé, Marwan Barghouti, who heads the Fatah candidates' list while continuing to serve five life terms in an Israeli jail (convicted of terrorism charges) appears on posters, urging people to vote for him as THE ENGINEER OF THE INTIFADA AND THE SYMBOL OF THE RESISTANCE. Huge orange placards for the Independent Palestine Party, headed by Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, promote civil society, education, and democracy. And the posters for fundamentalist Hamas' "Reform and Change" list, featuring three bearded sheiks running in the Ramallah district, pledge in Koran-like verse to champion the oppressed, root out corruption, and uphold women's rights.

Hamas, considered a terrorist organization by Israel and the West, has done exceedingly well in Palestinian local council elections and is expected to make a strong showing in the parliamentary ballot—its first test at the national level, having boycotted the 1996 elections. Palestinians credit Hamas for its militancy and for getting the Israelis out of Gaza. But the party also gets votes for its social welfare programs and its perceived honesty in financial matters, compared with the past decade of legendary P.A. corruption and growing anarchy under Fatah rule. In El Bireh, a relatively prosperous town abutting Ramallah, Hamas won a majority on the city council in mid-December and has installed one of its own as mayor. "Even many Christians voted for us, because they want real services and honest government," Omar Hamayel, the 29-year-old Hamas mayor, told me on his first day in office. (Of El Bireh's 44,000 residents, Christians make up about 4 percent.)

It is these internal issues of good governance and the economy that will preoccupy Palestinian voters on January 25. Having been "disengaged" from Israel, the Palestinians are focusing on themselves. "Palestinians think Israel and the United States will do what they want anyway. They don't see any solution, so this is not a priority in casting their vote for parliament," says Bashar Hamayel, the owner of a hardware store in El Bireh. Shikaki concurs. As he explained to me, at the moment, economics, corruption, and law and order rank as top priorities. Then comes the issue of how to deal with the occupation, through violence or not. The peace process—namely the consideration of who can best deliver or reach agreements—comes last.

For the Palestinians to regain faith in a peace process, they would have to see evidence of progress on the ground. And, so far, he says, the evidence in the West Bank is "all negative," consisting of more Israeli settlement-building and the ongoing security closure and checkpoint regime. Ramallah and El Bireh are themselves edged by a string of significant-sized settlements, such as Psagot and Beit El. The adjacent hills are out of bounds for Palestinian construction. Abdul Jawwad Saleh—an ex-mayor of El Bireh, a former P.A. minister, and a veteran secularist politician—says that, in a few years, "We will not have a place to bury our dead." Even Sharon's potential legacy—the prospect of further Israeli unilateral withdrawals—does little to encourage him. Regaining "some of the West Bank," he says, "means nothing at all."

Back at the Muqata, the work goes on to preserve Arafat's memory in concrete and stone. Muhammad, the guard, says that the mausoleum and mosque should be completed in five months' time. After his funeral, Arafat was said to have been buried in an easily removable tomb so that, one day, he could be reinterred in Jerusalem, the eastern half of which the Palestinians claim as the capital of their future state—and which is now sealed off from Ramallah by Sharon's security barrier. The construction underway here further attests to the fact that the Palestinians do not expect that day to come anytime soon. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

Past Perfect

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

WHEN EHUD OLMERT was a teenage leader of the right-wing Betar youth movement in the 1950s, he would mark May Day by tearing down the red flag that hung over the trade union building in his northern village of Binyamina. For Olmert and his friends, that flag symbolized what they referred to as "the Vichy government" of Labor Zionism, which had betrayed the land of Israel by twice accepting its partition—first in 1923, when the British created Transjordan, and then in 1947, when the Untied Nations divided what was left of historic Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Betar's fantasy map of a once-and-future Israel—incorporating the West Bank and the Kingdom of Jordan—hung on the walls of the clubhouse where Olmert served as "commander," and it was imprinted on the patch of his military-style uniform. At meetings, he would lead his scouts in singing, "Both banks of the Jordan [River], this one is ours and that one too."

While Olmert eventually accepted the loss of Transjordan, he devoted his political career to maintaining Israeli control over the territory won in the 1967 Six Day War. As a Likud Knesset member, he voted against Prime Minister Menachem Begin's decision to cede Sinai to Egypt in exchange for peace. And, as mayor of Jerusalem beginning in 1993, he defended Israel's right to govern the united city; his campaign posters invoked the nightmare image of PLO flags hanging from the Old City walls. Asked by a journalist in the 1980s to describe the most important public post he had held, he answered without hesitation, "Commander of the Binyamina branch of Betar."

Yet Olmert, acting prime minister and heir to Ariel Sharon as head of the new centrist Kadima Party, could now become the Israeli leader who presides over the partition of greater Israel—and even of united Jerusalem, an act he would have once considered treason. In the absence of a credible Palestinian partner for peace, Olmert supports unilateral withdrawal in the West Bank; indeed, he publicly endorsed unilateralism even before Sharon did.

The question Israelis are asking, though, is whether Olmert can handle it. After all, uprooting tens of thousands of ideologically committed settlers from the biblical heartland is likely to be far more politically traumatic than the withdrawal from Gaza. The conventional wisdom here is that, without Sharon, no further unilateral withdrawals are possible. Only Sharon and his military credentials, goes the argument, could have convinced the public to withdraw from most of the West Bank, despite the threat of Palestinian missiles falling on greater Tel Aviv. Olmert, by contrast, enjoys no such credibility: His career in uniform was mostly spent as a reporter for the army newspaper. But Olmert's ideological background affords him advantages that could well make the new leader of Kadima a more effective proponent of withdrawal than skeptics will admit.

FOR ONE THING, Olmert—with roots in Revisionist Zionism, the movement that spawned Betar and eventually the Likud—has right-wing bona fides that Sharon lacked. Sharon grew up in the Labor movement and related to the territories in pragmatic security terms. For Olmert, though, settling the territories was an historical imperative. "The ideological transformation that Ehud and I and others have made is far more painful than Sharon's," asserts Moshe Amirav, an Olmert friend from Betar days, who was expelled from the Likud for meeting with PLO leaders in the late '80s. "For us, separating from greater Israel meant losing our dream."

Those ideological credentials give Olmert the self-confidence to confront the settlers and their supporters without the unease that Sharon at times revealed, as when he initially avoided meeting with Gaza settlers to explain his about-face and then failed to defend himself vigorously against settler attacks. Olmert, by contrast, relishes a fight with opponents of withdrawal. Last August, on the first day of the Gaza pullout, Olmert represented the government at a ceremony at Ben-Gurion Airport to welcome 250 new American immigrants, most of them Orthodox and opponents of withdrawal. They were joined by several hundred Israeli family and friends, who were warned by organizers to keep politics out of the event. Yet it was Olmert who turned the event political. Goading his audience, he announced that the Gaza withdrawal was the beginning of a new era for Israel. When the crowd inevitably responded with boos and shouts of "traitor," Olmert smiled and taunted them back. Referring to Israel's demographic crisis, he said, "Maybe if you or a few million of you had come earlier, we wouldn't have had to leave Gaza."

That feistiness is a trait he acquired in Betar. To be a Betar member in 1950s Israel meant being the ultimate iconoclast. In a pioneering society that equated socialism with Zionism, capitalist Betar championed an alternative Zionist history whose heroes were Revisionists and villains were Laborites. Denouncing Israeli relations with Germany as a betrayal of the Jews who died in the Holocaust, Olmert and his friends picketed movie theaters that screened German films and refused to ride in Mercedes taxis. Even their uniforms marked them as anachronisms: Betar leaders wore light-blue ties on their dark blue uniforms—this, in a country whose prime minister went tieless. "We were considered strange, even lunatics, but we were proud of being outcasts," recalls Amirav.

Olmert has always been an in-your-face politician. He

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began his career in national politics by demanding that Menachem Begin resign as head of Herut, the precursor of the Likud, because of his electoral failures—an unprecedented attack on Begin's stature within the party. As the Knesset's youngest member at age 28, he joined with another junior member of parliament, left-wing provocateur Yossi Sarid, to challenge organized crime in soccer. (Olmert himself would later be investigated, and acquitted, on charges of campaign financing irregularities.) He never managed to build a wide political base, notes one Likud activist, because of his patronizing attitude: "Bibi [Benjamin Netanyahu] will agree with whatever you say and then go ahead and do the opposite, but Olmert wants you to know you're wrong."

SPECULATION ABOUT WHY Olmert changed his lifelong political commitment ranges from family pressures—his wife is a supporter of the left-wing Meretz party, and a daughter is active in a group monitoring Israeli checkpoints in the territories—to his tenure as Jerusalem's mayor. Miki Cohen, one of Olmert's mayoral aides, suggests that Olmert was transformed by his repeated exposure to terrorist attacks. "He went to every terror site as soon as the attack happened and saw the most terrible things," says Cohen. "He also went to most of the funerals, and then visited the families. Over the years, I often heard Revisionist ideas from him. But my sense is that those experiences convinced him that we had to try a different way."

Amirav, who teaches public policy, also sees Olmert's tenure as mayor of Jerusalem as a turning point: "He realized that maintaining control over 200,000 Palestinians endangers Israeli rule in the city. I once asked him if he had a solution for Jerusalem. He said he did, but he wouldn't tell me, because he's afraid to tell himself." Olmert, who, as mayor, supported Jewish settlements in the Jerusalem Arab neighborhood of Silwan, has gone on the record as supporting Israeli withdrawal from Jerusalem's outer Arab neighborhoods, but not from the Old City. Still, he will allow East Jerusalem Palestinians to vote in the upcoming Palestinian elections, a move opposed by the right as opening the way for repartitioning the city.

Some old comrades are enraged at Olmert for what they perceive as an even greater betrayal of the Revisionist legacy than his support for partition. In a speech last summer to a dovish American group, the Israel Policy Forum, Olmert claimed that Israelis long for peace because "we are tired of fighting, we are tired of being courageous, we are tired of winning, we are tired of defeating our enemies." Notes Yisrael Medad of Jerusalem's Menachem Begin Heritage Center: "It's one thing to endorse partition because of demographic reasons. But to play the defeatist in the middle of a war is a repudiation of everything Revisionist Zionism always stood for."

Indeed, that kind of "defeatist" rhetoric will play into the hands of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who, with Sharon's departure, has emerged as Kadima's most formidable rival. Labor's Amir Peretz is a lightweight with no security experience—hardly the man to reassure an anxious nation facing missile attacks from Gaza, periodic shelling from Hezbollah, an unstable West Bank, and an Iranian atomic bomb. In a recent poll, only 9 percent of Sephardim said they would vote for the Moroccan-born Peretz, Israel's first Sephardi candidate for prime minister.

Netanyahu, a former prime minister, will remind Israelis that, under his tenure, terrorism reached its lowest point over the last decade. And he'll also remind them that he warned that the Gaza withdrawal would result in Qassam rockets falling on the coastal city of Ashkelon. At the time, he was mocked by the press as an alarmist; now, though, rockets have hit the outskirts of Ashkelon. And, if those rocket attacks intensify, Netanyahu's warnings against further unilateral withdrawals will gain even more credibility.

Olmert's advantage is that he is the designated heir of one of Israel's most beloved prime ministers. By contrast, Netanyahu is widely resented, even among Likud voters, both for undermining Sharon's authority within the party and for his welfare cutbacks as finance minister. And the backing he has received from the settlers' umbrella group, the Yesha Council, has reinforced his inflexible image.

Still, Olmert faces several challenges. The first is to keep Kadima's politicians from bickering over power and policies and destroying the party in its infancy. So far, Kadima's leaders are acting with a sense of national responsibility rare in Israel's daily politics but typical in times of crisis. Though several Kadima figures see themselves as potential party heads, they've all accepted Olmert's leadership. Shimon Peres, the only Kadima politician who initially wavered in backing Olmert, was shamed by the Israeli press into belatedly endorsing him and has been appointed to the party's second slot.

Olmert's second challenge is to clarify what Kadima stands for. Despite his support for unilateral withdrawal, some Kadima figures, like former Shin Bet head Avi Dichter, openly oppose it. Under Sharon, the party's platform was essentially, "Trust me." Olmert won't be able to get away with Sharon's deliberate ambiguity.

Most of all, Olmert must convince the electorate that he's a hawkish dove—that is, not just flexible on territory but hard-line on security. In conveying that message, Olmert will be bolstered by several ex-Revisionists who, like him, have made the journey from right to center. His most important ally will be Kadima's candidate for foreign minister, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, who grew up in Betar and comes from a family steeped in Revisionist pathos; engraved on the tombstone of her father—a hero of the pre-state Irgun underground—is the old Revisionist map, including both banks of the Jordan River. The more Olmert can remind Israelis of where he comes from, the more they will trust him when he tries to pry Israel from its bank on the Jordan. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Spielberg's List

BY NOW THE FILMGOING world knows that Steven Spielberg has three selves. First is the self most frequently summoned, the maker of superlative entertainments (*Jaws*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*). His second self applies his talent seriously to serious subjects (*Schindler's List*, *Amistad*). The third self produces hybrids, films that use both of the other two selves (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Saving Private Ryan*). Spielberg's new film, **MUNICH**, was made by the third self. The subject could not be more serious, but the picture moves quickly into Filmland.

When Spielberg first announced *Munich*, which begins with the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in 1972 and then traces the retribution against the responsible Palestinian terrorists, he was also announcing difficulty. The project obviously involved political and moral daring. But the very difficulty of the subject, we could hope, might summon the best of Spielberg, which would mean thematic and cinematic fulfillment. Which is what some of us waited for.

The opening credits announce, a bit skittishly, that this film "is inspired by real events." The license could hardly be broader: how many films are not thus inspired? The screenplay is by Eric Roth, who wrote *Forrest Gump*, and Tony Kushner, who wrote *Angels in America*, but the result is more Roth than Kushner—more of the dialogue was written by a pro than by a sizzling talent. Their script was based on George Jonas's book *Vengeance* (1984), unread by me, but I have read the recently published *Striking Back* by Aaron J. Klein, a captain in the IDF's Intelligence. Even if we allow for the dramatization that any screenplay entails, the material in Klein's book is Spartan compared with the screenplay apparently drawn from Jonas.

After the electric opening sequence about the Olympic crimes, we meet a young Mossad agent named Avner who is picked to head a team that will hunt down and kill the terrorists—those who survived the Munich bloodbath and those who planned it. (Golda Meir herself insisted on retribution. According to Klein, she said to the families of the murdered men, "I've decided to pursue each and every one of them. Not one of the people involved in any way will be walking around on this earth for much longer.") Presumably a list of names is given to Avner's team, a list diametrically opposed to Schindler's—men marked for death, not for life. That list is the core of Spielberg's film.

We follow Avner and his team to various cities—Paris, Rome, London, Beirut, Athens—as they track down one after another of the men on the list. Inevitably there are waverings of intent in the team, unforeseen knots in their plans, quarrels among themselves. Purpose is refreshed by a chief who visits them in various places. (These meetings usually take place at a laden dinner table. Israel finances the retribution team generously.)

The film is long, and as it progresses it seems to get longer. We think, as one Palestinian falls, of how many more there are still to go. But the film's troubles are larger than these recurrent hints of tedium. As the picture proceeds, a mist of moral quandary rises around the flashes of action. Some commentators have noted that to follow day by day, month by month, the tracking and killing of the perpetrators is to be pressed into a parallel with the Munich crimes. At first, there is a swift natural surge for "striking back," but to live for so long in the métier of murder becomes in itself a problem. Edward Rothstein writes that *Munich* "fully acknowledges that terrorism is morally grotesque. The question is how to respond to it. The film tries to show that Israel made the wrong choice." The right choice is not patent in *Munich*, but the film does verify that the price of vengeance is steep. At the very end Avner has been so torn by the experience that he forsakes Israel.

And even this moral dilemma is not the root trouble: it only accompanies the film like incidental music. Essentially the film declines because it is *not* a moral drama: before long it begins to relish—is forced to relish—the fact that it is a thriller. Before seeing *Munich* I looked again at *Schindler's List*. (Disproportionate as it turned out to be, this re-visit seemed in order.) It was my fifth viewing, and yet again I was wonderstruck. Whatever else can be said about it, *Schindler's List* is masterfully directed. Every scene, every shot has been conceived with an almost angry simplicity, with a passion for truth that discards both the trite and the clever. I know few other films—and I'm remembering Bergman and Bresson and Antonioni, among others—that more authentically elevate form to the level of content. The very making of *Schindler's List* incises its subject powerfully.

This is woefully untrue of *Munich*. Partly this is because it is trapped in its story: whatever the original ideational motives, the material (bombings, shootings, chases, etc.) is that of a thriller—a genre that, in its formalities, exists independent of any theme. We have had dozens of thrillers based on important ideas—the trade in nuclear weapons, for instance—and in most cases, that theme soon seems only an excuse to make a thriller. In *Munich* Spielberg seems to have accepted this genre fate.

I cannot remember a moment in this new film that compares, simply in directorial originality, to the work in *Schindler's List*. The familiar thriller strophes flow by: for instance, the panning shot that reveals assassins in a parked car across the street from their intended victim. Near the end comes one attempt at a flourish—Avner's

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mind reverts to Munich while he is having sex with his wife—but it is more clumsy than affecting. At the close we are left with a thought that would have been impossible after *Schindler's List*: many a competent professional could have directed *Munich* equally well.

The cast supplies more verity than does any other element. Eric Bana, the Australian who plays Avner, is vigorous and as complex as is possible. Geoffrey Rush, another Australian, is the Mossad officer in charge of the team and, in this supporting role, is more at ease than in his past attempts at stardom. Daniel Craig, who will be the next James Bond, has no trace of heroics as a stalwart member of the team. Mathieu Amalric is impressively mysterious as a Frenchman who supplies the Israeli team with data about their victims. His father, the patriarch of a family that makes money by obtaining useful secrets and peddling them, is Michael Lonsdale, native of French and British films, whose very appearance promises that at least one role will be juicy.

Throughout *Munich* there are scatterings of ideas about Israeli and Palestinian principles. I suppose that if those remarks could be extracted and weighed, they would be about equal. So Spielberg cannot be indicted for partisanship, only for using these matters as décor. His irredeemable misstep here was not political: he did not foresee (we must assume) the trap of cinematic cliché that would inevitably snap shut. At any rate, he did little to compensate for it. ■

Sarah Williams Goldhagen

For the Birds

Santiago Calatrava's moment.

ANTONI GAUDÍ, THE LEGendary *modernista* architect of Barcelona, once predicted that the architect of the future "will build imitating Nature, for it is the most rational, long-lasting, and economical of all methods." One could conjure up many descriptions for Gaudí's spectacular, over-the-top, 370-foot-high Church of the Sagrada Familia (begun in 1882, and still unfinished), but "economic" or "rational" will not be among them. The Sagrada Familia—with its spreading, branch-like piers; its enormously complex geometries, based on such figures as helicoids and hyperbolic paraboloids; and its exuberantly naturalistic ornamentation, abundant with sometimes literally colorful imagery drawn from a cornucopia of mushroom heads, palm fronds, oranges, yucca plants, and wheat stalks—elicits thoughts not of rationalism, no matter how you define it, but of a kind of intricately structured *Wunderkammer* exploded to monumental scale.

Despite the complexity of the Sagrada Familia's forms, Gaudí's message is simple. In his building one is truly witness to nature, regarded as God's most splendorous creation. This architectural attempt to poach imagery or structural directives from nature's forms, visible and invisible, is but the most celebrated modern example in a long tradition stretching from Vitruvius through Buckminster Fuller. It is a tradition that has always struck me as slightly ridiculous: a category mistake, like trying to wrest a treatise in analytic philosophy out of Emily Dickinson. Despite Gaudí's architectural premises and the outright sensationalism of his built work, his highly representational Sagrada Familia is one of Europe's most popular and beloved buildings. One of the earliest instances of "destination architecture," every day it swarms with head-shaking visitors, most pronouncing it, in one or another language, incredible.

Santiago Calatrava, a Spaniard born in 1951 who is the spiritual heir to Gaudí, has recently skyrocketed into the ranks of the "starchitects" (Gehry, Hadid, Koolhaas, Libeskind, et al.). Like Gaudí, he insists that his projects are inspired by and founded in nature's underlying geometric structures, both simple and complex, and in its visible forms. Calatrava, also like Gaudí, and like some of his celebrated colleagues, makes architecture distinguished by its aggressive, photogenic iconicity. His buildings project striking images, and they make good logos. (An aerial view of several of Calatrava's buildings graces the official Spanish tourist bureau's promotional materials.)

For this reason, Calatrava's buildings and projects raise an urgent question. Is iconicity integral to good architecture? Can it, in some hands, be a deterrent to good architecture? These architects, practicing what marketing directors admiringly call "branding," are logging a staggering number of airplane hours; and in the process, they are transforming architecture's role in the international political economy by creating universal and instantly recognizable trademarks. In this newly organized professional context, imagery rules.

CALATRAVA, WHOSE PRINCIPAL office is in Zurich, owes his stardom to his facility for memorable and sometimes even breathtaking form-making, and his unusually multidisciplinary resumé. He trained as both an architect and an engineer, with a doctorate in technical science from the ETH Zurich, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. This background enables him to navigate among and interweave several disciplines, especially architecture and engineering, which one might think would logically conjoin but are often, in this country, puzzlingly cleft.

A penchant for eye-catching imagery and an ability to design and to engineer his own projects (offering clients a two-fer) have recently earned Calatrava an impressive handful of honors and commissions. He is the first architect since the Bronze Age to be anointed with an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a large one-room show of his kinetic and static sculptures, drawings, sketchbooks, and architectural models, as well as photographs and computer-animated walk-throughs of various buildings and bridges. Of late his office has been taking on not just the infrastructural projects by which Calatrava earned his reputation, but also architectural and urban ones: master plans for Valencia, Athens (the Olympic Complex), Liège, and Thessaloniki; skyscrapers in Malmö, Chicago, Atlanta, and New York City. And he continues to build ever more bridges,

Sarah Williams Goldhagen teaches at the Harvard Design School and is the author, most recently, of LOUIS KAHN'S SITUATED MODERNISM *(Yale University Press).*

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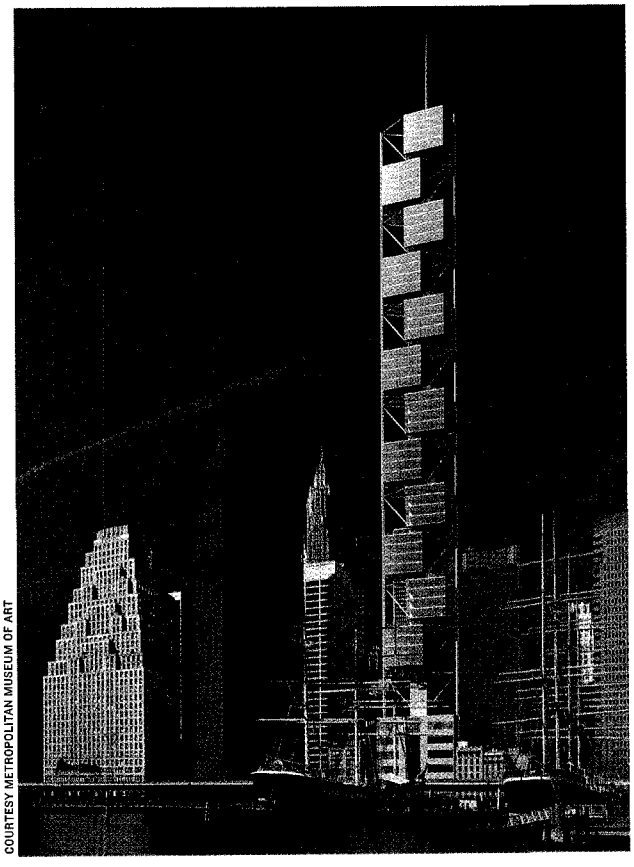
railroad stations, and airport terminals.

Most famously, Calatrava is the only boxer left standing in the catastrophic brawl of squandered opportunities and visions that is the re-building of Ground Zero in New York. He alone sidestepped the appalling political maneuvering and the naked professional and financial huckstering that is driving the World Trade Center re-development (or preventing it from being driven). He somehow massaged his commission into a cordial collaboration with the civil engineers from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, with whom he felt a professional kinship. And so ground was recently broken for his $2.21 billion transportation hub, which through the convergence of fourteen subways and one commuter train line links Lower Manhattan to Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and New Jersey.

Before this recent catapult to international fame, Calatrava enjoyed professional recognition as the wunderkind of bridges. His most famous is also one of his earliest, the Alamillo Bridge and La Cartuja Viaduct in Seville, completed in 1992. Slender and stunningly elegant, this 820-foot-long cable-stayed bridge is stabilized without anchorages. Typically, the horizontal roadway of a cable-stayed bridge is hung off two sets of steel cables, which are themselves attached at regular intervals, harp-like, to each of its sides, as in the Brooklyn Bridge. These steel cables are then gathered up, slung over vertical elements set into the water or ground below, and stretched toward land, where they are bundled into heavily weighted and often massively built anchorages. For the Alamillo Bridge, Calatrava built a single tapering, vertical concrete pier that lurches backward from the bridge's horizontal deck at an angle considerably wider than the typical ninety degrees. This single pier's wide angle, combined with its curvaceously thickened base, simultaneously stays a single (rather than a coupled) set of cables and provides enough weight to function as the anchorage for the entire bridge.

Although the loads carried by the Seville bridge are so light that the design really amounts to an awful lot of engineering for a very little bridge, the architecture world hailed it upon completion as a harbinger of great works to come, believing (or hoping) that finally it had found a successor to Robert Maillart, the legendary Swiss bridge-builder, and Pier Luigi Nervi, the famous mid-century Italian engineer-architect. The Alamillo project set Calatrava on a professional path of infrastructural projects of larger scale and increasing complexity. Many of these, such as some of his small-scale sculptural studies at the Met, appear to challenge the basic principles of physics with which all architects and engineers contend, such as the inherent properties of various materials and the forces of tension, compression, static and active loads, and shear, which is a static or applied stress on structures (such as wind) that causes contiguous parts to slide.



COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Santiago Calatrava, 80 South Street, New York City, East River skyline photomontage

The WTC transportation hub in Lower Manhattan embodies the strengths of Calatrava's designs. His client, the Port Authority, was aghast at the national calamity in which sixty of its own employees were among the thousands murdered, and so it specified that this enormous transportation complex be nearly or completely free of vertical supports, thinking that every column is a terrorist's opportunity to set down a bomb by its side. Calatrava designed and engineered a nearly column-free, two-hundred-plus-foot-wide span that embraces the underground rail systems converging on the site. This large below-ground space is the central conduit by which travelers ascend to the street.

A soaring birdlike icon rises atop an underground and therefore largely invisible project, dramatically announcing what arguably has always been and certainly is now the cynosure of Lower Manhattan. Whereas the transit hub in the old WTC towers was invisible to passersby, the new one will remind New York's cosmopolites that, even at street level, they often stand on what is effectively the second, third, or fourth level of a multi-story structure that is the metropolis. The project further emphasizes Manhattan's spatial and organizational complexity by specifying that natural light filter first through the glassed-in ceiling, then through several levels of semi-transparent floor planes, falling onto subway platforms even at the lowest level, sixty feet below grade. (In Calatrava's native Europe, where municipalities keep infrastructure well maintained, this design might work as planned. It is fair to wonder if, in grimy Manhattan where delayed maintenance is the norm, anyone standing on the N platform several years after the project's completion will register that natural light is falling her way.)

Considered according to the standard structural-engineering criteria, which include not only stability but also economy of materials and construction, the WTC project is overbuilt. Covering this two-hundred-foot clear span could be done with less. But low marks on the economic use of materials do not necessarily negate this or any other project's strengths. One's experience of New York will be immeasurably enriched by the WTC hub's reminders that the city is ever-transforming, spatially complex,

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and socially diverse, and yet still relies on one-hundred-plus-year-old technologies of transportation.

In the WTC project, as in many others, Calatrava turns pedestrian (often in both senses of the word) infrastructural projects into civic icons. In democratic societies, such icons can play an under-recognized and sustaining social and political role by promoting people's awareness that they are members of a community and a polity. They foster a sense of commonality by their sheer memorability, and by the physical act of drawing people together in a way that celebrates their collectivity. Calatrava understands this. For him, using infrastructural projects to create civic icons is a mission fueled by his ethically grounded (and altogether correct) view that any intervention in the built landscape, and especially a large-scale one, is an intrinsically social and political act.

Not every highway overpass requires an artistic statement. Still, approaching infrastructural projects as potential moments of civic monumentality—the norm in Europe, and also now in parts of Asia—should inspire American urbanists, architects, and engineers, and their patrons, to reconsider certain contemporary norms. And if American policymakers listen, then Calatrava's work could set a new and far higher standard for the infrastructural projects that soak up billions of federal and state dollars every year. (Congress's recently passed transportation bill designates more than $300 billion for the maintenance and construction of roads and bridges.)

To make this happen in the United States, professional and disciplinary obstacles will have to be overcome. The money devoted to infrastructural projects will actually have to be spent on them; moreover, some of it will have to be devoted to their design, not just to their construction. But even if local functionaries devote dollars to the appropriate ends, other impediments will remain. Over the past half-century, American architects have watched, at times in horror and at times in apathy, as their credibility and then their role in shaping the public realm have progressively eroded. They have surrendered component after component of what should be within the orbit of their professional practice to structural and civil engineers, to acoustic and HVAC consultants, to value engineers and project managers, to interior architects ... the list goes on. In Spain and other parts of Europe, the profession of civil engineering barely exists because architects are thoroughly schooled in engineering. In the United States, by contrast, top architectural schools rarely emphasize structural and civil engineering, with such topics currently occupying a figurative half-hour's worth of curricular attention. American civil engineers, in contrast to American architects, typically have little or no training in design, and sometimes a barely identifiable interest in it.

Notwithstanding the pecuniary habits of state and local governments and the professional divide between architects and civil engineers, collaborative teams occasionally are assembled, and occasionally they produce splendid things. One small but compelling example is Steven Holl and Michael Van Valkenburgh's recently completed water-treatment plant in Hamden, Connecticut, commissioned by the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority. But such projects remain anomalies to an otherwise dismal norm. And if inertia prevails over intelligent change, our landscapes will continue to be littered with projects that range in quality and visual interest from banality to the occasional outright calamity.

When Calatrava plays cat-and-mouse with the unchanging properties of physics, as in Seville, Orléans, or his spectacular pedestrian bridge in Buenos Aires, which pivots horizontally ninety degrees to make way for ships sailing through, his work delivers. So do a few of those small, elegant tension sculptures at the Met, and the white screen of tapering tubular steel rods, undulating in wave-like motions, that edged one walkway at the Athens Olympics. Even in architecture, Calatrava's simpler projects can carry a light touch of humor and elegance, as in the renovated and expanded Wohlen High School in Switzerland, for which he designed an outdoor pergola and two dramatic indoor roof spaces; or in his proposed seventy-four-story tower for South Street in Manhattan, in which four-story, translucent, stacked townhouses cantilever in alternating directions off what appear to be alarmingly slim metal rods.

Yet Calatrava's office is taking on more and more master plans and increasingly complex buildings, including a community hall in Alcoy, Spain, a symphony center in Atlanta, and the recently completed residential tower in Malmö. In his native Valencia, he has laid out a master plan for a geographically important derelict area between the historic downtown and the reclaimed waterfront. He also designed the infrastructure, the landscape plan, and all the buildings in an 86.5 acre complex called the City of Arts and Sciences. After fourteen years of construction, the Opera House and its administrative offices, the Planetarium, the Museum of Science, and a large parking garage are essentially finished, with several residential towers and an outdoor amphitheater yet to come.

In these urban designs, and in much of his architecture, Calatrava's work falls painfully flat. His organic images, which range from re-interpreted versions of Gaudí's palm fronds to running, twisting, dancing bodies to blinking eyes to birds alighting, are perfectly legible and utterly hokey. The style is exuberant but shallow; it is exuberantly shallow. This is true of the WTC transportation hub, which, for all its merits, projects (and is conceptually based on) the almost risible image of a child's hands releasing a bird into flight. It is the case also at the Milwaukee Art Museum, in which an apparently similar bird bedizens actually movable wings; and in the otherwise amusing Valencia Planetarium, a sculpted white half-sphere centered inside a steel-and-glass arc, which, when reflected in water, creates the image of a surrealistically floating Miró-like bluish-white eye. Its "eyelid" even opens and closes.

Transportation—flight. Planetarium—seeing. Get it? Too often Calatrava's buildings are little more than one-liners, architectural analogues to Roy Lichtenstein's public sculptures. As is the case in the public reception of the work of (the immeasurably more talented) Gaudí, people like the simplicity and the obvious iconicity of Calatrava's architecture. It is popular because it is comprehensible. To be sure, iconicity does not disqualify a building from considered praise, and neither do popular appeal and immediate comprehensibility. But are these really the main criteria by which we should select architects and judge architecture?

There is a word that characterizes the phenomenon that I am describing. That

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word is "kitsch." And as Calatrava builds more architectural projects, it becomes increasingly apparent that much of this work is not even well-considered kitsch. Consider Calatrava's long-standing interest in kinesthetic architecture. His extremely large structures often sport movable parts: the roof of the WTC hub will open to the sky every September 11, and the flapping "wings" of the Milwaukee Art Museum offer a slow-motion image of a bird taking off from the ground. It's cool. But for an architect who claims that his design principles are grounded in the natural world, it is more than slightly ironic that Calatrava exhibits little interest in environmentally responsible ("green") architecture. When in motion, these buildings must consume more energy than others thrice their size.

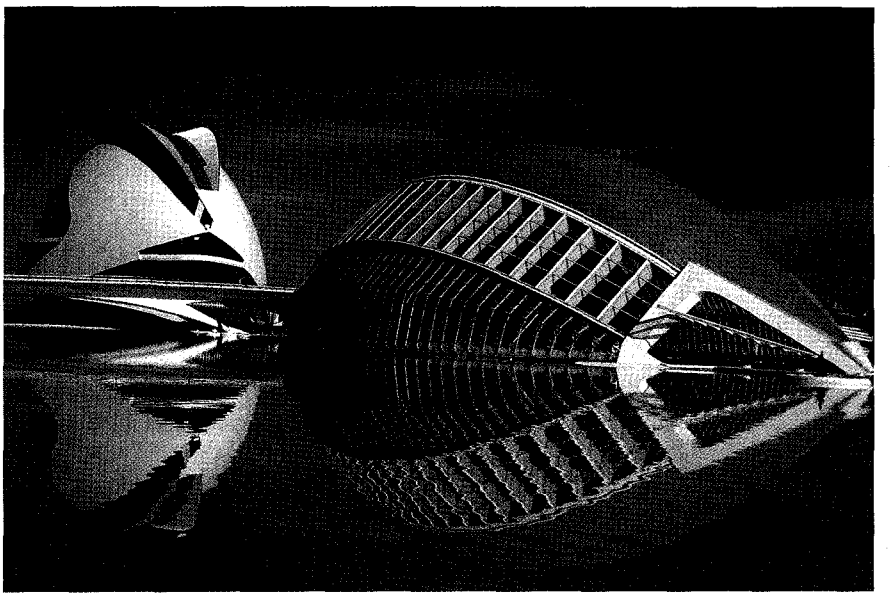
Calatrava's disinterest in developing design principles that account for the intrinsic properties of his materials and the processes of construction also exemplifies his failure to think through the aesthetic and the conceptual implications of his designs. Consider how he combines steel and concrete. Routinely he disguises the differences between these very different materials—painting, for example, steel members in the opera houses at Tenerife and Valencia to match the whiteness of his concrete. Since the Enlightenment, one strain of modern architecture has mandated that every material be expressed in its essence and no more, which is an excessively restrictive prescription that has been betrayed in practice even by the architects claiming to embrace it. Yet Calatrava's complete disregard for the architectural (in contrast to the technical) nuances of his materials means that he misses opportunities to relate to the user's bodily sense of tactility, materiality, and plasticity, and that he eschews the possibility of edging the user toward the realization that every building is a multitude of human decisions, any of which could have been decided otherwise. He effaces the coloristic, material, tactile, and actual differences between materials because doing so advances his overriding aim, which is to direct the viewer's focus not to the small-scale contingencies of everyday spatial experience, but to the building's overall external image.

His interiors are not better. His train stations, airports, and opera houses are all simple, loft-like, light-filled spaces. Yes, natural light indoors is nice. But these buildings finesse most of the practical, intellectual, or material problems from which great architecture is made. His museums in Milwaukee and Valencia are devoid of spatial complexity, lacking the sophisticated or innovative programmatic and spatial planning of such truly great museums as Henry van de Velde's Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo or James Stirling's Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart. At the planetarium in Valencia, Calatrava retains his imagistic eyeball purity only by shoving visitors underground into a depressing, low-ceilinged, artificially lit narrow corridor where one is successively herded along, invited to linger at predictable stops: café, gift shop, ticket counter, security check. Although in airport hangars (Bilbao) and train stations (Lyons) Calatrava's soaring, loft-like interiors are appropriate, in exhibition spaces such as the Museum of Science in Valencia the same design dodges the museum architect's two most important challenges: thinking through what sort of space best accommodates what exhibit—big or small, open or closed, low-ceilinged or high, naturally or artificially lit; and considering how exhibitions might be organized in relation to one another, and in what sequence.

Nor are these deficiencies and shortcomings limited to Calatrava's projects in the arts. The recently opened 623-foot steel-and-concrete Turning Torso in Malmö, a residential tower based on the image of a twisting human spine, is striking from its exterior, with its four planes twisting ninety degrees from street level to crown. But as a consequence of this torquing, windows are oddly skewed. Some users have found the views outside to be simply disorienting, which seems a less than appealing feature for the interior of one's home.

Calatrava's architecture often fails urbanistically as well. Many of his larger, more honorific buildings are deliberately set apart from their site. Here he is hardly alone among his colleagues, and in certain instances this blinders-on strategy works. After all, many building sites bear little history or immediate context worthy of attention, much less celebration. But to isolate and to monumentalize his buildings, Calatrava chooses the easy way out, as in Valencia, where he places them in shallow reflecting pools. Since the buildings are themselves so organically figurative, this strategy sometimes confers the clearly unintended impression that an enormous, threateningly predatory insect has just landed next to you in a sandy clear-bottomed stream.

Taken in the twenty-year aggregate of his career, Calatrava's work is shockingly, boringly repetitious. It elides the concept of branding into the principle, if not the practice, of mass production. Now, in the world of contemporary architecture, Mies van der Rohe's wise dictum that a new architecture need not be created every Monday morning is too often ignored—but the opposite extreme is not better. Calatrava's organi-



JOSE JORDAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Santiago Calatrava, Valencia Opera House and Planetarium

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cized arch motif, with only minor variations, appears in BCE Place in Toronto and an outdoor walkway in Athens as well as those in Valencia, the Oriente Station in Lisbon, and the Wohlen High School in Switzerland. The same buried Venus flytrap–like extrusion can be seen in the Pfalzkeller Gallery and the Akoy Community Center in Switzerland. Similarities between the Milwaukee Art Museum and the WTC transportation hub, between the opera houses in Tenerife and Valencia, have already been mentioned. To see these images over and over again, east and west, north and south, in the United States, in Europe, and also in Latin America, is unsettling in every sense of the word.

PERHAPS ONE MAN CANNOT BE master planner, urban designer, architect, landscape architect, civil and structural engineer, artist, sculptor, and draftsman all at once. Perhaps the stark discipline of bridge design reins in Calatrava's ebullient predisposition. Perhaps the ideology (and the business) of civic image-making has Calatrava stooping for ever more easily recognizable and quickly executable designs. Perhaps he finds that the disorderly complexity of human interaction poses architectural challenges to which he cannot or cares not to rise.

Or perhaps, in drawing his guiding principles and imagery from nature, Calatrava has chosen misguided premises on which to ground a contemporary architecture. Why, exactly, should a subway station look like a bird (except perhaps to encourage people to take flight from an ineptly re-developed downtown Manhattan)? Why should architecture, in image or in structure, be dictated by nature at all? The great postwar architect Louis Kahn fiddled with this problem in the early 1950s, determining the guiding principles of his architecture by adopting tetrahedral geometries found in natural forms such as snowflake crystals and radiolarian (a type of protozoa). After a few years, Kahn realized that he was careening toward a dead end, and he changed his reference points entirely. Instead, he carefully constructed normative ideals for the social and cultural institutions he built, and looked toward abstract art, historical precedents, and contemporary practices to arrive at forms that architecturally embodied these norms and facilitated the social practices that he envisioned.

Maybe the first architects needed to pay obeisance to nature's designs, but that primal moment is long gone. Architecture—and "nature," too—is a human construct. Whether or not designers need to acknowledge their buildings' physical and material properties (and for reasons too complex to lay out here, I believe they do), they violate the essence of the art when they fail to design buildings and cities that reflect, accommodate, and symbolize who we are, how we live, and how we think we might or *should* live. When Kahn abandoned nature as his guide, he began to create his great mature works, such as the National Assembly in Dhaka, Bangladesh and the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. Concluding that architecture's essence is social and cultural, Kahn, for the rest of his life, insisted that "architecture is what nature is not."

Shaping his architecture around long-established verities about the biological and natural grounds of the human condition, Santiago Calatrava seems to be afflicted with multiple blind spots that prohibit him from taking on architecture's highly complex intrinsic and non-naturalistic challenges. Whatever its debts to our biological being, human civilization is cultural, social, political, and more. And its embodiment in our buildings, our landscapes, and our cities should say so. ■

David Bromwich
Maenads and Jihadis

HOLY TERROR
By Terry Eagleton
(Oxford University Press, 148 pp., $22)

DYING TO WIN: THE STRATEGIC LOGIC OF SUICIDE TERRORISM
By Robert A. Pape
(University of Chicago Press, 335 pp., $25.95)

THE FIRST AND OFTEN THE only thing one knows about a suicide bomber is that he is someone with more to die for than to live for. That such a person would make use of his readiness to suffer quickly, horribly, and finally is not a recent development in the history of nations. Nor does it exhibit a peculiarly modern form of radical evil. Terrorism, the murder of the innocent to achieve a political end, goes back at least to the Shia assassins of the twelfth century, and probably further back than that. It may occur wherever a religious or political ideal takes hold that has the power to absolve its believers of the wrong that they commit in its name. Suicide bombing is a more desperate and in some settings a more cunning adaptation of terrorism; but any terrorist is a hunted man who knows that his death may not lag far behind the deaths of his latest victims. Only a messianic politician, at the mercy of his own wildness and simplicity, could suppose it possible to conduct a worldwide purge of terrorism until one by one the guilty are subtracted and "all of the terrorists are dead."

Around the end of the Cold War, there arose a school of semi-official comforters who taught Americans that we were living at the end of history. They said that present-day America, with its magnificent free market, was the intended climax of human endeavor through the ages. A residue of this enthusiasm prompted many to look on suicide bombing, and more generally on terrorism, as a knot to be untied in the passage from the era of tyrannies to the everlasting age of the global market. As if these killings were something that wandered out of another script and into ours. As if, once they were removed, we could return to our promised ending.

But history is not the sort of thing that ends. It did not pause for long when a corps of grand strategists made the discovery that there was only one great power left in the world, and that the United States could now by force of

David Bromwich is a professor of English at Yale University and the editor of a selection of Edmund Burke's political writings, ON EMPIRE, LIBERTY, AND REFORM *(Yale University Press).*

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arms dominate without fighting the lesser powers. That false dawn was darkened by the savagery of the attack on the World Trade Center. The hope was discredited a second time by the violence that greeted the American occupation of Iraq. Meanwhile, out of the failure of the end of history, a vast field of exercise has opened up for the philosophy of current events.

This new pamphlet literature, appearing at the rate of dozens of books each month, affords an echo of the pamphlet wars of the 1790s: the impressive debate about the principles of politics that emerged in Britain in response to the French Revolution. A significant difference is that the pamphlet writers today show little interest in reading one another. Written by lawyers, therapists, journalists, divines, moral philosophers, literary critics, and scholars-without-portfolio at think tanks, most of these books are easily forgotten, but memorableness is not a virtue prized in this genre. A world-terror pamphlet should make its readers feel thoughtful, panicked, and prepared. So an early pamphlet writer, Alan Dershowitz, argued that in the new world of stateless terrorism, Americans must learn to inflict torture, and that to square the barbarous cruelty with our legal conscience, "torture warrants" ought to be issued by judges. Dershowitz was careful to add that though a court-sanctioned torturer might justifiably harm a suspect, he must on no account use an unsterilized needle. This brought up a new set of questions, and we were ready for a pamphlet by a doctor.

TERRY EAGLETON IS A LITERary critic with strong political and theological interests, whose first writings were contributions to radical Catholicism in the wake of Vatican II. He now lives for most of each year in Ireland. Eagleton has thus been exposed, from more than one angle, to the motives, the methods of operation, and the intellectual and political climates of terrorism. In view of these commitments and experiences, the odd thing about his new book is its lack of political specification. *Holy Terror* is concerned with appetites or attractions that may lead to terrorism, and it sketches various ideas of the sacred, the sublime, sexual ecstasy, the end of the world, and the relationship between unchecked oppression and lawless revenge. The aesthetic dimension of terror seems to be what Eagleton finds most compelling. This means, above all, the desire for extreme sensations. More particularly, the aesthetic attraction of terror relates to the wish—fed by religion and itself a cause of religion—to experience emotions of awe and transport to the point of revelation. This was not an emphasis to be expected from a writer mainly known as a political critic of literature.

Eagleton identifies terrorism with the wholly irrational—an intuition that may be close to common sense but is not therefore infallible. This choice of a theme dictates his choice of texts, and the most substantial part of *Holy Terror* is an interpretation of a single work, *The Bacchae*. Other works of imagination are treated in passing—*Measure for Measure*, *Women in Love*—but it is the strangely ironic tragedy by Euripides that matters most to Eagleton's analysis of terror. The play turns on a dramatic standoff between the legitimate king of Thebes, Pentheus, a keeper of public order, and the god and guru Dionysus, who knows that people love to be out of their minds. You can get a fair idea of the drift of his argument from a string of sentences like these:

> *The Bacchae* insists on the deep affinity between terrorism and injustice. Pentheus is destroyed because he refuses to welcome the stranger, closing his gates to an alien power which is both subversive and redemptive. Authoritarians like him can see dissidence only as anarchy, and by stamping on it as hard as they do they become self-fulfilling prophets.

"Self-fulfilling" is the word that delivers the message. We are asked to wonder whether a more imaginative Pentheus might have held back the maenads, or at least cooperated with their rapture in such a way as to preserve himself.

"ANARCHY AND ABSOLUTISM," Eagleton says, "are the recto and verso of each other. Both suspect that chaos is our natural condition. It is just that absolutists fear it, whereas anarchists revel in it." This familiar truth Eagleton varies a little by calling the two current manifestations of the verso "Texan" and "Taliban" fundamentalism—names that already sound glib and dated. Still, he is right that the absolution guaranteed by religious fanaticism has smoothed the way for the killers of innocents. Fanatics in every major faith "have their dreams, wherewith they weave/A paradise for a sect." A man who believes himself to be the chosen instrument of God is capable of infinite mischief and infinite destructiveness. He will always forgive himself, and will always believe himself forgiven by God. So much for the political ambitions that underwrite the failed attempt by Pentheus to secure order. But to what forces in the present world does the "anarchist" of the above description correspond? Who now plays the part of Dionysus, the god who revels in disorder?

The nice balance of anarchy with absolutism strikes me as a literary man's conceit. Or possibly Eagleton is a victim of his sense of propriety. He has striven by indirection to avoid "relevance": it would have been easy to write on this subject armed with Dostoevsky and Sartre. But the burden of the philosophy of current events is that relevance must be paid off. The cost is evident when the author comes to discuss resentment as a motive of terror. He says that Jesus is a hero of self-sacrifice. Meanwhile, God the Father is this hero's tormentor, the authority figure who demands propitiation. Such a view of the relationship between the Father and the Son comes less from the Bible than from a reading of *Paradise Lost*: God is too satisfied to be counted as a hero, or even as a worthy object of admiration. Eagleton speaks of the poisonous emotions that the story may evoke if read too literally: "God is a terrorist who demands the blood of his son as the price for having been mortally offended." Simple and submissive minds, then, will read theology in an orthodox way and cultivate belief in a fearful God who asks for human sacrifice. Simple and rebellious minds will revolt against that God. So, too, with reactions to later secular authorities who make comparable demands. Some people resent God in the same way that they resent a social order that claims an absolute warrant. They are, says Eagleton, "bound to see him as an unholy terror, rather as those who deny justice in political affairs are likely these days to provoke carnage and chaos." Thus, orthodox theology issues in orthodox counter-theology. Each is linked to a politics that cuts down charity and mistakes revenge for atonement.

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Buried in this truism is a partial truth. Political violence comes from above as well as below—from those, that is, who have power and aim to keep it, and from those who crave power and will do anything to get it. A plan of national security designed to preserve a nation and the insurgent imperative to create a nation are antithetical alibis for such acts. The common feature is the idea of the nation; and George Orwell in "Notes on Nationalism" performed a great service to intellectual clarity when he applied the word "nationalism" to religious and political phenomena alike. People endow the nation with the power to absolve them of guilt for crimes they commit on behalf of the nation. As for the broader psychology of nationalism, Orwell calls it "power hunger tempered by self-deception"—a disease to which every state is susceptible.

If a constitution is the work of a moral imagination, the idea of the nation is in large measure the work of a nonmoral imagination. The power of imagination is dangerous and cannot be trusted to contain itself. The emergency state of mind tends to suppress our awareness of this truth. And to the extent that Eagleton's strictures on theology are an extension of Orwell's, his warning is salutary. Yet his additional idea that the image of power itself is what "provokes" the powerless is facile. It reduces to cause and effect a more elusive fact about the relationship between hardened enemies. Where enemies do to each other all that hatred allows, terrorism and war have in common a passion that stops at nothing short of death.

UNBOUNDED PASSION IS EAGLETON'S real subject. He takes what may seem an academic turn by dealing with it under the heading of "the sublime," but he is pointing to a fact that less pretentious writers have noticed, too. What disturbed many people about the phrase "shock and awe" was that it suggested aesthetic admiration for a spectacle of destruction. Eagleton has this in mind when he puts into the category of the sublime everything "perilous, shattering, ravishing, traumatic, excessive, exhilarating, dwarfing, astonishing, uncontainable, overwhelming, boundless, obscure, terrifying, enthralling, and uplifting." Attracted by such moods and excitements, military planners and freelance killers feel at liberty to forget themselves.

The suicide bomber who imagines he can blast himself up to God is thrilled by an aesthetic idea that does not know its name: he may call it fame, or paradise. This seems a fair reading of one motive shared by some recent terrorists who have left a record of their intentions. Yet as Eagleton goes on, he seems to have in mind a much more special case:

> By freely submitting to ineluctable failure, he reveals a boundlessness in himself which is at one with the august powers against which he struggles. Only a power from beyond the hero's creaturely existence could enable him to relinquish that existence. The act of drawing a limit to one's own capabilities must somehow spring from beyond them. On the battleground of his body, then, two kinds of infinity fight it out, and are shown to be secretly one.... The act of free assent by which he makes his destiny his choice allows him to rise above that destiny, demonstrating that it is not, after all, the last word.

This is metaphysical trash. And when the argument turns to the domain of theology proper, it keeps to the same abstract register: "The true terror at the heart of reality is the human subject, which for Augustine is a kind of nothingness. Fearful of this gulf in being, the fundamentalist seeks to stuff it with absolute values and unbending principles." Eagleton sums up the terrorist as a reductive interpreter who evades a true confrontation with nothingness. His intellectual preoccupations at this point trivialize and thoroughly depoliticize the argument. A theory about "the battleground of the body" may be impossible to disprove, but it does not bring us close to understanding the passage from thought to violent action in the mind of a single person.

EAGLETON LOOKS TO GET SOME help in explaining the motives of terrorists from Edmund Burke on the sublime. Yet Burke wisely stayed out of these depths. He paused, instead, at the implications of a surface phenomenon. The feeling of the sublime comes from something we fear, something distant enough for the fear to be experienced without practical risk. The satisfaction that follows an explosion from a shell you fire, or from the devastation of a city, which you look upon without a thought of the inhabitants—these partake of the emotions of the sublime. The feeling that your own house is about to be bombed, or that you are about to blow yourself up, belongs to a different category. It puts the spectator too close to be entertained.

That most of humanity much of the times admire violent effects for no reason is among the puzzles of human nature. It shows the extent to which right and wrong do not inhabit our most elemental motives of action; and the strength of Burke is to serve as a nononsense guide to these limited truths. But Eagleton misses the point by trying to pump it up: "Burke thinks that we need a therapeutic dose of terror every now and then to prevent society from growing enervated and effete." But hygiene is not the point. We are drawn to scenes of violence and ruin not as therapy, but in obedience to an appetite. Yet the appetite is compelling only so long as we are out of danger. This goes some way to explain the vogue of American pilgrimages to Ground Zero—a journey undertaken by many who would have been content never to see those buildings in their glory. It gives a clue as well to the emotions of the bombardier who dropped the atom bomb on Nagasaki, who spoke later of the terror of the explosion but added that dropping the bomb was "my greatest thrill of my life." It would be absurd to suppose an identity between the minds of such spectators and the person who ignites the fuse on a suicide bomb. Such a person at such a time is a paralyzed will in motion.

Too many of Eagleton's digressions, like his pages on Burke on the sublime, are seduced by a love of sheer plausibility and marred by a fatal glibness. He cannot stand on the brink of a true

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perception without drawing it into a chain of glamorous inferences that destroy its precision. Thus he compares suicide bombers and hunger strikers—an interesting analogy at first, because the strikers may be the allies of terrorists; and yet the moral content of their actions differs sharply. The latter do not aim at self-sacrifice, they aim at murder. That they have to die themselves is a regrettable but necessary side effect.

This distinction is slurred over by Eagleton's view of the killers as bearers of a quasi-theological prestige: "In destroying their own flesh and blood, hunger strikers and suicide bombers bear witness to a power which is in their view even more formidable than the state." Now the idea of bearing witness seems to me important enough to avoid turning it into claptrap; but the transfer of moral idealism from the striker to the suicide bomber does just that. Having assimilated the two kinds of action, Eagleton then treats their unity as a fact: "The death of the suicide bomber is likely to prove far more significant an event than anything in his life. It becomes, in fact, the only truly historic occurrence in the careers of the dumped and disregarded, the point where—having torn small children to shreds and vaporized the blameless—they can feel most intensely alive." Such a passage is disgusting in a number of ways. First, because the vaporized killer cannot be "most intensely alive" at the moment of death, when he is not feeling anything. There is also something callous about the automatic value placed on "significance" and "the historic"—a usual fascination of those whose morality turns with changes in the exhibited forms of power.

A FAIRER ANALOGY FOR SUICIDE bombers might be found among "just assassins" like the Russian revolutionists of 1905, the killers of the Grand Duke Sergei, who preferred hanging to clemency toward themselves when the world's injustices had been augmented by their own acts. But this analogy also misses the mark. Suicide bombers may resemble just assassins in that they kill and choose to die. But the just assassins were not suicide bombers: they loved life and parted with it only to condemn their own deeds. They chose their target and wished him dead, and, even so, felt remorse and a need for expiation. They did not contrive to be absolved by the Absolute.

Partly because of this severe belief in the moral law, it is hard to imagine a party of just assassins serving as the vanguard of a movement of popular resistance. If recent suicide terrorists have found popular support in Sri Lanka, Palestine, Iraq, and elsewhere, a reason may be that they embody the only highly visible protest against a hated authority. Eagleton speaks of "the lack of organized political resistance to the present system [of global capitalism], of the kind to which socialists have traditionally been dedicated, which encourages it to trample upon the weak, thus stimulating the growth of terror." But the disappearance of an international party for social justice is probably a minor cause of the outbreaks of the past twenty years. More telling, as Robert A. Pape suggests in *Dying to Win*, are such local causes as religious enmity, linguistic difference, a rebellion in progress, and an army of occupation.

On these matters, Eagleton is again the captive of a curious mixture of romantic politics and common sense. His common sense is driven by socialist sympathies, whereas the common sense Americans have grown used to is driven by the "globalizing" sympathies of market propagandists such as Thomas L. Friedman. Such journalists and journalistic historians command today much of the audience that once looked to statesmen for practical wisdom. But the statesmen have proved to be fragile prophets. Speaking of the American money that subsidized Osama bin Laden against the Soviet army in Afghanistan, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who initiated the support, remarked some years later: "What was more important in the world-view of history? The Taliban or the fall of the Soviet empire? A few stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?" He was so sure. And Brzezinski is a relatively sober example. The fatuousness of the comment could be paralleled in the writings and speeches of many other luminaries of the policy elite.

ALL THE DIFFERENCES NOTwithstanding, there is a strong continuity between acts of terror and war. A soldier shooting at soldiers is a different moral entity from a terrorist who smuggles a bomb into a restaurant. Yet so long as the incantation of war, terror, mission, evil, world, freedom, and humanity invites our acquiescence by those cadences that thrill the blood, sanity requires that we subdue the glow around the words. All but the most insensate terrorists believe that their victims include as many as possible of the guilty. They even make up stories to prove this to their own satisfaction, such as the story that everyone who worked in the World Trade Center was an agent of American imperialism. All but the most wanton soldiers believe that they are killing as few as possible of the innocent. The innocent dead in both cases are equally dead. To the person who has lost a husband or wife or child or friend, revenge is equally tempting if the killer was wearing a dynamite pack or seated in a cockpit at twenty thousand feet and aiming at the next building. Reckless killing is the purpose of the suicide bomber. Targeted killing—with some untargeted almost sure to be hit—is the purpose of the bomber pilot. It is no use trying to drive the two cases further apart with a piece of euphemistic phraseology like "collateral damage." This is an area in which elaboration soon becomes casuistry. It may be plausible, but it is not morally credible to praise war as a perennial necessity and one of the glories of life, in the manner of Victor Davis Hanson, while denouncing terrorism as a barbarity that must be fought tooth and nail.

THE MOTIVES FOR SUICIDE TERror may be roughly divided into (1) religious fulfillment; (2) revenge; (3) founding a state; and (4) resistance to occupation. *Holy Terror*, when one looks at the details, is concerned rather narrowly with (1) and (2). *Dying to Win* suggests that the terrorism of the past two decades, and especially the suicide bombings, has emerged saliently as instances of (4), with (3) often a discernible secondary motive. (1) and (2) in Pape's view are possible and always exacerbating causes, but as he reads the evidence, they have not excited vengeful or ecstatic persons to the length of killing others by killing themselves.

A restless habit of combing the evidence is one of several qualities that distinguish *Dying to Win* from *Holy Terror*. Where the latter is speculative and rhapsodic, the former is prosaic and matter-of-fact. If there is a singleness of emphasis that allows the argument to miss a dimension, it comes from the assumption that terrorists may be analyzed as

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rational actors. Yet our tendency has been to assume the opposite without proof: that they act out of blind resentment, indifferent to circumstance, consumed by a generalized hatred of the West. Vice President Cheney in recent statements has plucked a word of menace, "Caliphate," from an anti-Islamist primer, Mary Habeck's *Knowing the Enemy*, and has used the word to suggest that a Caliphate is in hailing distance of circling the globe from Jakarta to Manhattan. By contrast, *Dying to Win* touches on the known extremes of a recognizable world.

Pape's discussion also supplies the instruments to test his own hypothesis. If people tend to become suicide terrorists because they want to resist a foreign occupation, and if they use the tactic only where they think it has a strong chance of success, we should be able to understand the logic of their acts inductively. It will be written all over what they say and do, and interpretable from what they do not say or do. The idea that a terrorist hopes to merge with God is not susceptible to proof. Who knows what they think of what they read and chant? Marching orders are a different matter. We will learn in the next few years, or whenever the United States no longer keeps thousands of troops on Muslim soil, whether Pape is right that suicide terrorists mainly act for a community with which they identify themselves; that they press hardest against a foreign army of occupation from a country whose religion is different; and that they direct their attacks at democracies and not at less tractable regimes—as the Kurdish suicide bombers hit Turkey but spared Iraq under Saddam Hussein. It must be added that occupation is a matter of fact as well as a matter of belief. Five thousand American troops, left over after the first Gulf war on sealed-off bases in Saudi Arabia, did not seem to Americans (if we remembered them) an army of occupation; but to those who hated them simply for the knowledge that they were there, alternative explanations were unlikely to carry conviction.

The almost colorless language of Pape's account has its own limitations, but it serves as a counter-irritant to the rhetoric of the pamphleteers. His purpose, he says, is to work out a strategy for eliminating the present generation of terrorists without supplying the political and imaginative soil for another generation to grow. Admittedly, this is a strategy that lacks the emotional satisfaction of pledging to kill until you have killed them all. But that pledge is a fantasy. It takes the enemy to be a natural kind—as if our actions exerted no influence on their numbers of new recruits. The problem any society faces about such people is how to be rid of them, but it is not forbidden to understand who they are.

TERRORISM HAS BEEN A TACTIC chiefly adopted by partisans or by resistance fighters or by an insurgency that sees itself as a nation struggling to be born. The acts are done to achieve a political end, and they are evil—a word that should be used sparingly lest it lose much of its force. Acts of terror, then, are an aberration that must not become a pattern. And the acts are performed by human beings. These separate facts need to be held in a single thought; and the whole truth is even stranger. A terrorist began life as a person and may go back to being a person. It happened in France, after the terror of *les armées revolutionnaires*, and in Santo Domingo after the rebellion of the Black Jacobins. It happened in America after Bloody Kansas and the Missouri raids of the James brothers. It happened in Israel with independence and in South Africa with full emancipation. It may be happening now in Northern Ireland. Human beings do such things, but sometimes they stop doing them, and sometimes they stop and regret.

Pape teaches political science at the University of Chicago and has also taught at the U.S. Air Force School of Advanced Airpower Studies. Over the past several years, he has compiled an exhaustive database on suicide terrorists. At the writing of his book, it contained all that was known about 315 suicide attacks from 1980 through 2003. His research into the motives, the agents, and the circumstances of the attacks has convinced him that nationalism is the leading motive of suicide terror. The attackers are not for the most part religious, nor, he says, particularly Islamist. They cover a wide range: some college-educated, some illiterate; some well-off, others poor; the youngest fifteen, the oldest fifty-two.

The picture of Islamist terrorism as the offspring of a unified ideology Pape believes to be essentially false. You may arrive at that view by reading their theology and taking to heart their ugly promises, but this is to proceed by the a priori method, whereas Pape works from the data to a conclusion. The various fundamentalist movements do not recognize one another's authority, and their collaborations thus far have been episodic and expedient. All are anti-Western in some way, and several call for imitation of the Islam of the Prophet. But politically, as movers of violent action and self-sacrifice, they have waited for moments when they could appear as the conspicuous opposition to an imperial threat made vivid by a foreign army of occupation. The way then lies open for their soldiers to become martyrs in a cause of national liberation. This posthumous fame is all-important. "An individual can die," observes Pape. "Only a community can make a martyr."

An important case study for him is the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. News reports at the time made much of the Islamic identity of the attackers, and it was widely supposed that Islamic fundamen-

Postscript

I lost the blue handle
of things, a paintbrush, our
ticket stubs.

I gathered gauze,
the cloud of you, curtains
ordinary as fog.

Books I stole from you,
I lost. The sinuous line
of these mountains

like a graph of doubt
rising. I thought
wrong—

the heart is
small and dull.
I heard the trees

their birdless sighs.
I lost by accident:
noon's silence, the wonder

that forgetting makes.
You were gone
in the eyes, my origin.

JENNIFER CHANG

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talism had driven them. After a year of going over the evidence in detail, Pape found that twenty-seven of the forty-one suicide attackers "were communists or socialists with no commitment to religious extremism; three were Christians. Only eight suicide attackers were affiliated with Islamic fundamentalism." The common motive of those willing to take their own lives was fear of "a religiously motivated occupier," and the actions are mainly intelligible as "extreme self-sacrifice to end the occupation." A similar result emerged from his examination of Al Qaeda suicide terrorists. Among the seventy-one who killed themselves in the years 1995–2003, twice as many came from Muslim countries with a significant fundamentalist population as from those without it, but an Al Qaeda suicide bomber was ten times more likely to come from a country occupied by the United States than from an unoccupied country. A coercive foreign presence intensifies the injured pride, rage, and indignation that lead to suicide attacks. For this reason Pape concludes that the United States has made a mistake "by embarking on a policy to conquer Muslim countries." That is not, of course, the stated policy of the United States; but the evidence of the senses tells a story that few in the region doubt, and Pape will not presume to correct them until the evidence changes.

He dismisses cult suicide and anomic suicide—the action of the brainwashed and the psychologically adrift—as irrelevant to most of the cases he studied. Team suicides are the rule: an expression of solidarity, for the killer martyrs are signaling their loyalty to a small community that stands for a larger one. "Members of the group typically go to great lengths to deepen their social ties, to participate actively in social institutions, and to adopt customs that display communal devotion." Thus, beginning in 1982, Hezbollah drew much sentimental gratitude for its 130,000 scholarships and aid to 135,000 families, along with the granting of interest-free loans. The organization also paid for sewing courses to enable the self-support of the handicapped, and, through a cover charity, it built two hospitals. Hamas has taken up the same pattern of subsidy, "deeply embedded in the surrounding society, supporting an extensive network of more than forty social welfare organizations"; and with the Tamil Tigers again one sees a philanthropy that is at once unselfish and cynical: "food, water, resettlement housing, health services, and interest-free loans." Bin Laden's humanitarian offshoots have names like Human Concern International and Mercy International as well as the Islamic International Relief Organization. They do what they say they do, while they remain bin Laden's creatures. Concerning the Benevolence International Foundation and the Global Relief Organization, the 9/11 Commission found (in its own words) "little compelling evidence that either of these charities actually provided financial support to al-Qaeda." The profit they yielded was moral prestige.

Together with the heterogeneous profiles of suicide killers, something new that emerges in *Dying to Win* is the alternation of moral postures among those who order the acts of self-destruction. You have, on the one hand, a spirit of reverential glorification suitable to heroes of sport and war: a Tamil Tiger discourse says that the martyrs "die in the arena of struggle with the intense passion for the freedom of their people," a field where "the death of every martyr constitutes a brave act of enunciation of freedom." Equally marked is an almost opposite trait, a calculating single-minded discipline: the Ayatollah Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, observed once that "the self-martyring operation" should never go forward unless "it can convulse the enemy." A more refined calculus now and then appears, by which "the believer cannot blow himself up unless the results will equal or exceed the loss of the believer's soul." The grotesque trade-off of charred bodies for lost souls turns into a question of pure utility when an interviewer asks a Hamas spokesman why they do not just plant a bomb and run, and the spokesman answers: "There are more fatalities in a suicide attack." Calculation drives not only the choice of the place for dealing death, but the acceptable ratio of self-sacrifice to the duration of the contest: "Tamil Eelam [the Tamil homeland] can be achieved in 100 years. But if we conduct Black Tiger [suicide] operations, we can shorten the suffering of the people and achieve Tamil Eelam in a shorter period of time." President Bush believes that democracy is something every people wants, because the God of all has put a wish for democracy into every person on earth. The documentary testimony of Pape's killers suggests that what everybody wants is something cruder and less definite: a nation.

"War on terror" is a stirring phrase. There was a time last year—two days, maybe three—when it seemed that the Bush administration had stopped talking of a war on terror. The office of Donald Rumsfeld spun out a few substitutes that were duly found wanting in salt and savor. How absurd to expect them to give it up. Three words bristling sharp and bright that make the listener who intends to do nothing feel manly and remarkable; feel, in fact, that by speaking or hearing the phrase, he has done something like kill a terrorist. An administration of strutting warriors who stand firm in the conviction of their own innocence are scarcely equipped to fight without a phrase like this. The belief, meanwhile, that "we are good" (as the president has said all Americans are good) is a sign that the person who says it is forever absolved in his own eyes. Why do we feel such a person is apt to leave bodies strewn all around?

Carl Schmitt observed that the division of friend and enemy defined the political; the only people who would deny this, he guessed, were liberals—in the largest sense of the tradition that includes America. Liberals, Schmitt thought, believe that all people are potentially their friends and that their party encompasses nothing less than all of humanity. But if that is so, their enemies cannot be mere enemies. After all, who could oppose someone who fights for the human? Only the inhuman. But if I am fighting against the inhuman, there is no limit on what I am permitted to do to my enemy—or to my own country in order to get at the enemy. In this sense, liberalism, or, to give a name closer to home, evangelical democracy, is a genuinely apocalyptic faith.

A story about the descent into a war on the inhuman was recounted by Dexter Filkins in a remarkable essay in *The New York Times Magazine* on October 23, 2005. Filkins told of the rise and fall of valor in Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Sassaman, in action around Samarra in 2004. Sassaman, writes Filkins, who was "adored" by his superior officer Major General Raymond Odierno "for the zeal

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with which his men hunted down guerrillas," did what was expected and more. "He sent his men into the Sunni villages around Balad to kick down doors and detain their angry young men. When Sassaman spoke of sending his soldiers into Samarra, his eyes gleamed. 'We are going to inflict extreme violence,' he said." Notice the words "adored" and "gleamed," words that carry a religious and aesthetic charge, finely caught by a reporter who has seen firsthand the intoxication of battle. That adoration and that gleam are a high thing when applied to fitting objects; but something different happened here. This soldier, who had shown so much courage and efficiency, was ordered by superiors to "increase lethality"—a vague command like "extract information" which has been used in Iraq both to induce atrocities and to screen the responsible from public view. Sassaman followed the cue of a half-defined categorical command. When his men abused two of the enemy, within the apparent allowable limits of torment short of death, by forcing them to jump into the Tigris River at night, this experiment in increased lethality seems to have miscarried. One of the victims disappeared, and it is probable that he drowned.

THE PITY OF WAR—THAT such adoration should be so misused—is connected with the terror of war. Organized violence injures the virtues by contaminating them with vices that are their doubles—as, for example, the aggression of brutality resembles the assertiveness of courage. This is in itself a reason why wars are to be avoided. But does not everyone wish to avoid every war? Nothing could be more false. War is a glut of exaltations. It always has been. In all of Shakespeare's plays that picture war, ordinary people are shown greeting the coming of war in a festive mood. It is the mood of people who do not guess that they will be hurt. A nation that feels omnipotent in arms is perpetually at risk from that mood.

Man is a self-justifying animal. The nadir of self-justification in recent memory was reached in the past few months with the barefaced apology for torture by Dick Cheney and the sophistical attempt to juggle definitions of torture by Alberto Gonzalez. And the justifications pile on: we are asked to agree that the threat of terror exposes the United States to perils more dreadful than any that the country has endured before; that in view of this unprecedented fact, we ought to trust our leaders to "protect" us even if it means suspending all previous understandings of civil liberty. But there have been times of the world worse than this for the United States. The Cold War was a great deal worse, if you take away the halo of nostalgia. These shuffling evasions may avert judgment for a while at the hands of a public even more confused than it is frightened. But when the architects of Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib justify their savage actions as inevitable reactions to terror, we may wonder whether a free society is defined by any principle of action that stands above our reactions.

Terrorism, to repeat, is not the same as war, but war stands on an uneasy continuum with terror. It is said that American commanders in Iraq have watched *The Battle of Algiers* to help them understand what they are up against. They should tell their civilian chiefs to look at another work from the same time and place, an essay by a doctor who got to know the victims of torture, Frantz Fanon's "Colonial War and Mental Disorders." To have been "tortured night and day for nothing," Fanon wrote, "seemed to have broken something in these men," but there was another consequence for the survivors and their friends: total indifference to all moral arguments, indifference that closed in the belief that "there is no just cause. A cause which entrains torture is a weak cause. Therefore the fighting strength [of the FLN insurgency] must at all costs be increased; its justness must not be questioned. Force is the only thing that counts." Torture of the FLN in Algeria was the means by which state terror was integrated with state power in a war on terror. It was, of course, justified by the French as an emergency tactic. But in a time of perpetual emergency—and the vice president has told us that we are living in such a time—all tactics are emergency tactics and all are justified. And yet emergencies end, but memory does not die. Other eyes will see what our hands have done. There are practices that cannot be defended. Let us say it once and then without casuistry. The terrorist is one kind of criminal and deformity, the torturer is another kind of criminal and deformity. If the end we aim at is a world without both, the end must be present and legible in the means that we use to get there. ■

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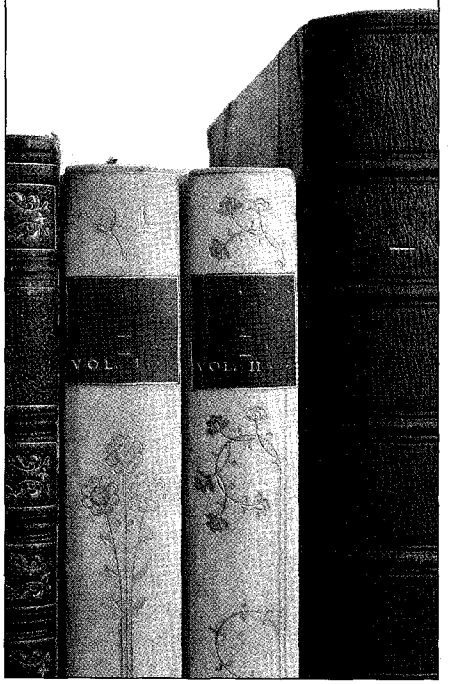

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Unsettled

In the spring of 1978, when the euphoria of doves who were exhilarated by Sadat's journey to Jerusalem was giving way to the euphoria of hawks who were exhilarated by Begin's refusal to allow that magnificent event to annul the geographical dreams of Jewish chauvinism, I spent an afternoon in Samaria with Ariel Sharon. Sharon was the minister of agriculture in the Likud government, and the chairman of the ministerial committee for settlement affairs. There were no Samaritans in Samaria, though political violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank was still a few years away. I was in the company of a shrewd and dauntless friend who was covering the territories for *Haaretz*, which meant hitting the roads in the morning in search of the facts—a concrete foundation poured, a barbed-wire fence erected, a telephone pole raised—that had been created by Sharon under cover of night. These things were often done furtively, because the golden age of Israeli settlement was also the golden age of Israeli diplomacy. Sharon had presented his extravagant plans for the Judaization of the territories only six weeks or so before Sadat appeared in Israel, the Camp David accords were signed a month after the first Jewish families arrived in Ariel, and so on. I wanted to know why, in Sharon's opinion, such a policy—the simultaneous pursuit of peaceful Israel and Greater Israel—was not perilously divided against itself. My friend and I met him at a settlement called Karnei Shomron, another new fact. He wore a black Members Only jacket and seemed to know the name of every settler he saw. He was indifferent to their metaphysical vapor, but not to its uses. And of course he turned up with his big rolled maps, which he carried in his hand like a blunderbuss. We paused at an outcropping at the side of a road to ponder the maps, which were supposed to be all that we needed to know.

Spreading them out on a rock, Sharon showed us where the strategic crossroads in the West Bank were, and how they could be controlled by a combination of infrastructure and colonization, thereby precluding any Palestinian territory sufficiently contiguous to be called a state. I thought he was mad. What about the vast Palestinian population that already inhabited these regions? About this, he had nothing of note to say. Perhaps he already held the view, which became clear four years later when he launched the Lebanon war, that Jordan was the real Palestine. He mumbled a few silly words about the Jews of the world eventually coming home to Zion, and mentioned the importance of strategic depth to Israel's security, and waited for us to admire his vision. I was struck mainly by the power of his single-mindedness. He seemed full of ideas but without thought. Even more than he believed in force, he believed in movement. Sharon was a unilateralist of the right who became a unilateralist of the left. Unilateralism, for him, was not a doctrine, it was a temperament. The wall against the Palestinians, the withdrawal from Gaza, the invention of Kadima: these, too, were expressions of his addiction to action. Finally Sharon's diabolical energy found an undiabolical purpose—and then he was robbed of it completely. Now he lies still, as his doctors try to stimulate the bulldozer with Mozart. For such a man, stillness is a true malediction.

It is easy to revile Sharon. So much of his bravery was attended by cruelty. And yet, in his stirring apostasy of the last few years, Sharon gave proof in himself of the quality of self-overcoming, which is the most uncommon quality of all. There is something darkly comic about the shared difficulties of the right and the left in praising him. Nobody any longer wants him all, which is as it should be: he does not add up. So it is worth remarking that all of the peacemakers of Israel—Begin, Rabin (whose military and political history with the Palestinians was not exactly tender), Sharon—have all been heroes of self-overcoming. This is not because only they had the "credibility" to make peace: it is a dubious credibility that is owed to a record of violence. The reason is deeper. It is that the only sort of dovishness that makes sense in Israel is a hawkish dovishness. For we have not yet seen the day when the argument for territorial compromise and the creation of a Palestinian state may be made by Israelis on the grounds that the Palestinians are keen for order and peace. Quite the contrary. There is anarchy in Palestine, and Hamas is ascendant. As Steven Erlanger chillingly observed in *The New York Times* last Sunday, the Palestinian Authority "may look like a failed state even before it becomes one." And in Iran, a primitive anti-Semite is ordering the internationally monitored seals on his nuclear facilities broken. The only peace that is available to Israel is a premature peace, and the Israeli center, the mixture of prudence and decency that Sharon (*Arik melekh yisrael!*) represented, is wagering that a premature peace may not be a counterfeit peace.

There are good reasons for such a wager. Israel is spectacularly strong; and the peace with Egypt and Jordan has withstood two intifadas and an American war in Iraq; and the Soviet Union is still dead; and the requirements of Israeli safety have nothing to do with the requirements of Jewish eschatology; and Benjamin Netanyahu's nasty politics of fear does not deserve to find shelter behind the monumental failures of the Palestinians. (Netanyahu is now busy ridding his party of its radicals and portraying himself as Sharon's good son.) But the best reason for the wager, of course, is that the demographic inevitabilities between the river and the sea are now incontrovertible. No, that's not right: they were incontrovertible decades ago. But at last they have been acknowledged by Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert and other figures on the right who have more important things to be than right. I overcame my skepticism about Sharon's change of heart on April 14, 2004, when he came to Washington to tell President Bush that Israel will insist upon retaining five settlement blocs on the West Bank. Five! The press exploded that an American president had for the first time acceded to Israeli settlements. They missed the scoop, which was that the foreign policy of Israel had been emancipated from the fantasies and the stratagems of the settlers by the man who was once their god. Of all the people to establish a political basis for a practicable peace! But that is precisely what this grand and brutish man has done.

LEON WIESELTIER

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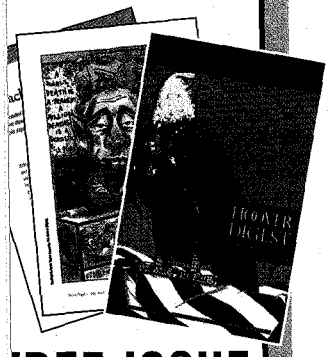

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The risks of nuclear energy are widely exaggerated, and these risks must in any event be balanced against geopolitical and environmental risks from relying on fossil fuels. The time has come, I have concluded, to follow the example set by other countries and remove the many unnecessary regulatory obstacles to the building of additional nuclear power plants.

—Gary Becker

How Can We Reform Our National Security System?

By letting the White House call the shots

In our national security system as it now stands, policymaking has become a process of bureaucratic competition and negotiation, rather than direction and management. Every meeting to coordinate policy delays action, every compromise to accommodate one department or another, waters down decisive action. Day by day, national security policy is smoothed down to the lowest common denominator.

These problems beg for a restructuring of the national security system as sweeping as the Goldwater-Nichols restructuring of the Pentagon. The new national security structure would concentrate policy development in the White House, giving the president the ability to create the equivalent of combatant commanders—four to six "presidential policy directors," each of whom would take responsibility for a component of the National Security Strategy, report directly to the president, and possess the command authority to produce results.

—Bruce Berkowitz and Kori Schake

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